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# THE BRITISH NAVY:

*ITS STRENGTH, RESOURCES, AND  
ADMINISTRATION.*

BY

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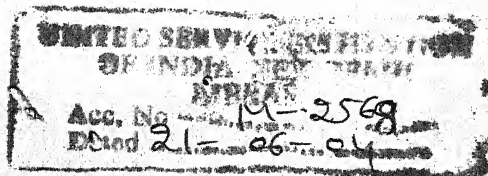
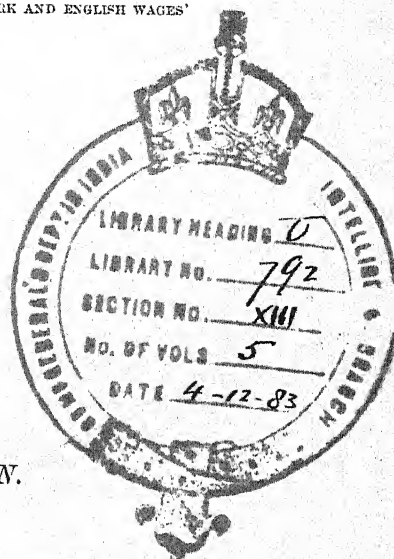
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AUTHOR OF 'WORK AND WAGES'  
'LECTURES ON THE LABOUR QUESTION' 'FOREIGN WORK AND ENGLISH WAGES'  
AND 'BRITISH SEAMEN.'

VOLUME V.

PART V.

BRITISH SEAMEN.



LONDON:  
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1883.

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PREFACE  
TO  
THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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UNDER the title 'British Seamen' the present volume first appeared in 1877. The Merchant Service, as our main resource for the reinforcement of the Navy, falls properly within the scope of a general review of naval affairs; and a republication of the author's work forms an appropriate conclusion to a series of papers on the British Navy.

In reprinting, quotations have been omitted, statistics have been corrected, a new chapter on recent legislation affecting the seaman has been added, and the entire work revised by Mr. F. W. HAINE, of the Board of Trade.





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PART VIII.  
MERCANTILE MARINE.

VOL. V.

B





SECTION I.

*BRITISH SEAMEN*

AS DESCRIBED IN RECENT PARLIAMENTARY AND  
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.



## INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are the result of much study of Blue Books, Parliamentary Returns, the Reports of Commissions and Committees; and the evidence of the most competent witnesses has been diligently examined in an impartial spirit. It has been my sincere desire to ascertain the truth about our seamen, and to devise the best means of increasing their efficiency, improving their material and social condition, and elevating their character.

The merit of originality cannot be claimed for the opinions and suggestions set forth in these pages. They are compiled—and herein alone consist their use and value—from the published testimony of authorities whether in maritime, commercial, or official spheres.

I have freely availed myself of the information and the suggestions of Sir Frederick Grey, Lord Eslington, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, some time Vice-president—Mr. Farrer, Secretary—and Mr. Gray, the Marine Secretary—of the Board of Trade. I have also liberally quoted Messrs. M'Iver, Burns, Norwood, Donald Currie, Dunlop, and others too numerous to particularise. Long paragraphs have been transcribed from Messrs. Balfour and Williamson, Captain Wilson, R.N., and Captain Ballantyne; and I have borrowed largely from the *Nautical Magazine* and the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*.

While such a compilation cannot be esteemed a brilliant performance, it may prove useful in a humbler way. It may be a help towards a truer appreciation of the conditions under which men live who pass their days upon the sea, and earn their bread upon its troubled waters. It is in this hope that I submit it to the reader.

Amid the various and unceasing calls of public and private duty the compilation of this work has been an arduous task, in which I should scarcely have persevered had I not been encouraged in its prosecution by many memories of pleasant cruises around the coasts of England and in more distant waters. In a spirit of gratitude for pleasures so keenly enjoyed, it is the highest ambition of my life to co-operate with men of greater influence and authority in promoting the welfare of the seafaring classes.





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## CHAPTER I.

### HAS THE BRITISH SEAMAN DETERIORATED ?

RECENT legislation has been confined chiefly to the seaworthiness of the ships of the merchant service: it will, however, be admitted that safety at sea is very imperfectly assured, unless our ships are manned by well-disciplined seamen.

Several witnesses before the Commission on Unseaworthy Ships spoke strongly to the deterioration of our seamen; and most important evidence in support of this view of the case was furnished by the Committee of Shipowners, formed at Liverpool in 1870. In November 1869 Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who was then Secretary to the Board of Trade, had visited their port with the view of obtaining information upon subjects connected with merchant shipping legislation. During the discussions which took place, the condition of the sailors of the mercantile marine became a prominent topic. An opinion was generally expressed that they had deteriorated both in skill and conduct; and an association was formed for the purpose of prosecuting a systematic inquiry.

The members of the Committee were Messrs. Bryce Allan, Balfour, Beazley, Christopher Bushell, Duckworth, Forwood, Galloway, Hall (of Newcastle), Ismay, P. H. Rathbone, Squarey, Ward, and Williamson, with whom were associated Captains Judkins and Ballantyne.

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Their first report was prepared in 1870, and was based on a preliminary inquiry by a sub-committee, who had issued a circular, containing a well-considered series of questions, to the principal ship-owners and most experienced shipmasters of the port. Replies were received from thirty-one masters of sailing ships, thirteen masters of sailing and steamships, four masters of steamships, fourteen late masters, now owners or overlookers; thirty-nine sailing-ship owners, three steamship owners, and seven others, coming under none of these designations. The principal deductions from an analysis of the replies were tabulated as follows: 89 per cent. state that seamen have deteriorated as seamen; 65 per cent. that they have





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deteriorated in physical condition; 71 per cent. that they have deteriorated in subordination.

In anticipation of comprehensive legislation, the Committee issued a supplementary report in October 1874. In this document the unfavourable opinion of the merchant seamen is repeated, though if possible in even more decided and emphatic terms than before. An influential meeting of shipowners had been summoned in 1872, to meet representatives from the Board of Trade at Liverpool, when the conclusions at which the Committee had arrived had been ratified with almost unbroken unanimity. While the additional information, collected during the lapse of the five years devoted to their inquiry, had induced the Committee to alter their original suggestions on points of detail, they alleged that their first impressions, both as to the actual condition of the seamen and the best means of improving them, had in the main been strongly confirmed. The Committee further quoted the speech delivered at Liverpool by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, in which he declared it to be his firm conviction that 'so long as the system of crimping and advance-notes existed, they would have no certainty as to how many ships might be lost before they had gone their first day's voyage.'

The Liverpool Committee not only investigated the actual condition of the merchant service, but they undertook the far more difficult task of remedial legislation. Their proposals were embodied in the following resolutions, which were passed at a meeting held on October 20, 1874:—

'1. It is undesirable that the present training, industrial, and reformatory school-ships be interfered with in any way, except that the State should give such ships pecuniary aid, in the form of a capitation grant, as in the case of public elementary schools.

'2. Care should be taken not to weaken the valuable system of apprenticeship now in operation, but to encourage it.

'3. Training ships and [or] nautical schools are absolutely needful for the education of seamen for the merchant navy, and for educating a sufficient number of boys to maintain the Royal Naval Reserve at the strength recommended by the Royal Commission of 1859. Government should establish such ships and [or] schools in the different seaports of the United Kingdom.

'4. The expense of maintenance of these training-ships should be borne by the Government and by the mercantile marine; and the proportion of the expense falling upon the mercantile marine should be defrayed by an annual tonnage contribution not exceeding 6*d.* per ton—to be returned to those ships which carry



indentured apprentices up to a fixed standard, hereafter to be agreed upon.

'5. All vessels under 100 tons register to be exempt from contribution.

'6. Boys to be admitted into the training-ships between the ages of 14 and 16 years, to be subjected to a medical examination and to bind themselves—

'(a) To serve in the Royal Naval Reserve for such period and on such terms as the Government may determine.

'(b) To remain in the training-ships for not less than 12 or 18 months.

'(c) And further, to serve in British merchant ships for a fixed period of not less than three years.

'7. The management of these training-ships should be vested in persons to be appointed by the Government and mercantile marine: the ships to be periodically inspected by an officer appointed by the Admiralty.'

A copy of these resolutions was circulated amongst the ship-owners' associations established at the principal ports, and they were invited to give their opinion as to the expediency of adopting them.

The suggestions of the Liverpool Committee found unanimous approval on all points save one. The proposal for a compulsory contribution for the maintenance of training-ships was at once rejected by the shipowners of the north-eastern ports, and subsequent events gave reason to believe that shipowners generally would object to taxation for such a purpose.

We shall have occasion to revert to these resolutions in greater detail. They are given in this place in a connected form, in justice to the Liverpool Committee, who had bestowed so much labour and thought on the preparation of plans for effective remedial legislation.

The latest official evidence as to the deterioration of the British seaman is contained in the replies of the consular body to the interrogatories addressed to them in the Board of Trade circular of 1869. The following are selected, as examples of the numerous unfavourable opinions contained in the Blue Book:—

Replies of  
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*Vice-Consul W. H. Wrench, Dardanelles.*—'British seamen appear to be deteriorating in seamanship as well as in discipline. Shipmasters to whom I have spoken on this subject, while all agreeing as to the effect, differ in their opinions as to the cause. The reasons most frequently given for the falling off are: the discontinuance of the former system of apprenticeship; the existence of



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the ordinary seaman, offering as it does a premium to apprentices to desert ; the introduction of foreign seamen ; the carelessness with which the rating of A.B. is given ; the system, followed by masters to avoid trouble, of always giving their crew on discharge V. G. characters ; and finally, masters not having by law sufficient powers for keeping their crews in order.'

*Consul the Honourable E. J. Monson, St. Michael's.*—'The relation between the masters and the seamen is a subject which cannot be taken into too serious consideration by the legislature. Year by year our merchant ships are manned by an inferior class of sailors, whose insubordination and unruliness are yearly on the increase. The masters are really almost powerless to enforce discipline ; their hands are tied by law, and the seamen know it. It is but a few days since that the masters of all the British vessels in this port, some twenty in number, came to me in a body to complain of the mutinous conduct of their men, who, in defiance of orders, in disregard of my warning and of that of the local authorities, insist upon coming on shore, where their presence is always liable to produce a riot.'

*Consul J. G. C. L. Newnham, Amsterdam.*—'The general condition of British seamen that come under my notice is indifferent, foreign seamen being as a rule a more sober and respectable class of men. The crews of steamships give far less trouble than those of sailing vessels.'

*Consul R. W. Cumberbatch, Smyrna.*—'I consider the general description of seamen on board sailing vessels has much deteriorated during the last ten years, in comparison with the men of twenty years ago. Numbers have never been to sea before sixteen or eighteen years of age, and are undersized men, quite unfit for serious navigation. The crews of steamers belonging to the opulent companies give little or no trouble, as they are all picked men, and are much better provided for than the seamen belonging to sailing vessels, which appear to be obliged to take what is refused by the steamers.'

• *Consul F. J. Cridland, Mobile.*—'The general condition of the seamen who come under the notice of this Consulate is a very bad one. In eight cases out of ten their health is very bad, they are generally affected with severe syphilis, they are badly clad, have little or no effects of any value, and no means of purchasing the same. Many cannot read or write, and they are generally discontented with their condition on board, and further, they seldom tell the truth regarding any matter they complain of. British steam-

•



ships have only visited this port since the end of the late war, and the crews have never given any trouble to this office, and consequently they are preferable to sailing ships in every respect.'

*Consul Charles Lever, Trieste.*—'The willingness of masters to ship very inferior men of other nations is not merely from their greater habits of sobriety, but that the discipline is more easily maintained than amongst Englishmen. With a Norwegian or Swedish crew I have repeatedly heard masters declare that an unpleasant entry in the log was an event the very rarest, and I am fully convinced it is the laxity of discipline and the impossibility of enforcing any penalties on its infraction, that emboldens the British sailor to resist authority and defy his superior.'

'The crews of steamships give much less trouble than the crews of sailing vessels, who are generally speaking a superior class of men, for the most part married men, and careful for the interest of their families.'

*Consul W. L. Booker, San Francisco, 1872.*—'The seamen shipped at this port are generally men of good *physique*, and make excellent sailors. During the nineteen years I have been at this Consulate, I have observed no falling off in their physical condition or capacity; they do not appear to me to have morally advanced to any perceptible extent, and I have been surprised at their stationary condition as regards education. The seaman of the present day is, on the whole, less amenable to discipline than formerly.'

*Consul J. A. Blackwell, Stettin, 1872.*—'British seamen at this port as well as at Swinemunde are sadly too much addicted to drink, and as brandy, especially the common brandy distilled from potatoes, is cheap, and as there is no lack of public-houses, or rather brandy and beer-shops, near the harbour, every facility is afforded them for indulging in their evil propensity. In this respect the Scotch are the worst, and quite the reverse of the Welsh, who are remarkable for their orderly conduct and sobriety.'

'The crews of steamers give far less trouble than the crews of sailing vessels. The most troublesome are the crews of the small Scotch herring vessels.'

*Consul J. Grignon, Riga, 1872.*—'The contrast between the seamen belonging to the British merchant vessel, as seen at this port, and the seamen belonging to the Danish, Swedish, French, and North German vessel of the same class, is most striking, and entirely to the disadvantage of the former. The utter absence of discipline on board the British merchant vessel will sufficiently account for this. When I say that from the beginning to the end of the season the



Consulate is daily filled with masters of vessels complaining of the drunkenness, disobedience, and insolence of their crews, and all, without exception, clamorous for the immediate imprisonment of the offenders, which the Consul has no power to order, I shall have sufficiently explained what I mean by the words "absence of discipline."

'I except from the above remarks the crews of steamships and those of the regular Scotch traders frequenting this port—these last generally from Arbroath and Aberdeen. No fault can be found with the conduct of either masters or seamen.'

*Consul C. E. A. Kortright, Philadelphia, 1872.*—'The general condition of the British sailor as regards his *morale* is not favourable. He is often intemperate; seldom provides himself with sufficient clothing for sea service; neglects attacks of venereal and other diseases; spends his wages before he has earned them; and in the event of sickness, is helpless and falls on the protection of the Government.'

*Consul A. de Capel Crowe, Copenhagen, 1872.*—'The general condition of the merchant seamen is in my opinion very unsatisfactory. I have been twenty-one years in the Consular service, and in that time have seen no improvement in them.

'The wages paid in England are higher than those of most other countries, and the value the British seaman gives in return is as a rule less.

'When of temperate habits and under a good master he is probably the best sailor in the world, both as regards seamanship and labour capacity; but, unfortunately, temperance appears to have become the exception, insobriety the rule, and when under the influence of drink he is brutal and insubordinate, and acts totally regardless of consequences.

'One-half of the discharges that take place at our Consulates abroad are, I should say, in consequence of insubordination and violence (the result of drunkenness) and incapacity, but endorsed on the articles and registers as "by mutual consent," in order to avoid delays and disturbances.

• 'Another frequent cause of disability is sickness, the result of certain contagious diseases more prevalent among our sailors than foreigners, owing to the absence of control in Great Britain over that special class of disease; and I may also add from the miserable accommodation provided for them in many of our timber and coal ships.

• 'The crews of steamships give decidedly less trouble than those of sailing ships.'

*Consul Major James St. John Munro, Monte Video, 1872.*—  
 ‘The standard of British seamen seems to deteriorate every year; those that come to this port, with the exception of the wholly Scotch crews, are mostly picked up at Liverpool and Cardiff, and appear to be the refuse of the class, the Cardiff crews being especially bad, and the larger the ship the greater appears to be the insubordinate character of the crew.’

Copious unofficial testimony may be adduced of a tenor still less favourable to the British seaman. The following passages form part of an article published in the *Journal of the National Lifeboat Institution*. The remarks of the editor are the more disappointing, because they emanate from an institution which fulfils a noble mission of mercy to the mariner. In a paper on the Merchant Shipping Act of 1875, the seaman is spoken of as degraded by long periods of neglect, and by being systematically thought of, dealt with, and spoken of as a mere drinking and working animal, to be tossed on board in a helpless state, when the ship was ready for sea, for the purpose of hauling on certain ropes when he got sober, and to be tossed on shore again at the end of the voyage, to get drunk and remain so till wanted once more. ‘The sailor now views with a wondering sort of listlessness the efforts made to raise his moral and social condition. But this cannot always be so. Sailors must take that place in the moral world which is occupied by the great mass of their brethren. Instead of being marked throughout the world as the most utterly debauched men in it, they must at least be no worse than their neighbours. And so urgent is the need, that we may safely assume that by the infusion of fresh blood from the training-ships hereafter to be established in every British port, by the abolition of the advance-note and crimping system yet to be made law, and stricter surveillance as to the sobriety and healthiness of the crews, before shipment and sailing, great strides will be made in the next few years.’

*National  
Lifeboat  
Journal.*

It is generally, and, as I believe, rightly supposed that the crews of steamers are of a superior class. This, however, cannot always be so. An English sea captain, in an article in *Fraser's Magazine* for May 1874, declares that ‘the ordinary crews of our magnificent ocean steamers are probably the worst afloat. Most of these men, who enter as able seamen, are totally ignorant of the ordinary duties of their profession, being unable to hand, reef, or steer. In bad weather, and in cases of great emergency, they entail an amount of anxiety on the captain and officers which cannot be estimated by those who are not conversant with the responsibility of a sea life.’

*Fraser's  
Magazine.*



A great number ship with the intention of robbing the emigrants during their passage, and subsequently deserting on arriving at New York. Several of the great companies have their private police, who occasionally detect these men with goods secreted on their persons, but the difficulties and expense attending conviction are so great that the majority escape all punishment. A few months since a steerage passenger came to complain that, during the night, a sailor had run against him and torn his watch and guard from his pocket. A rigid search was instituted, but no trace of the missing articles could be discovered. Frequently companies have to pay for boxes broken open and contents rifled. No one dreams of trusting a party of seamen alone in a baggage room or hold, for such an opportunity for plundering would not be missed by them. Among this particular class desertion is a regular trade, and it is carried on with an impunity which is perfectly startling to those who are ignorant of the system. Thus, a man will, with the aid of a crimp, desert from one ship and immediately enter another, which is probably returning to his original port of entry. He does this with the full assurance that no one will molest him on arrival in England. A combination amongst the various companies would seriously lessen this evil, but, unfortunately, there is not much unison on any subject which affects the common interest of all.'

The inferiority of the seamen of the present day, and the diminution in the number of trained seamen, are attributed by some to the development of steam navigation, by others to the abolition of compulsory apprenticeship in the merchant service.

Captain  
Murray.

From Captain Murray, an able commander in the Peninsular and Oriental service, I have the following discouraging report: 'The quality of the merchant seaman has deteriorated very much, and the number of skilled seamen has decreased. More than half of the men now called seamen are of such a quality as was unknown formerly. Some excellent seamen are still to be found; but they are so few that the finest services only can get them. The Superintendent of Mercantile Marine at Glasgow says that he cannot find good men for a few ships of the Peninsular and Oriental Company suddenly requiring crews at that port. Ten per cent. of the able seamen annually shipped in the port of London are foreigners. They are employed because English seamen are not to be obtained.

'Omitting from our consideration the men belonging to the Royal Navy and the Royal Naval Reserve, our seamen are inferior to the Swedes, Norwegians, and Germans. In Sweden the system of apprenticeship is extensively adopted. On the coast of China

Swedish ships are frequently seen manned in a very large proportion by lads, who have gone out for a three years' trading voyage, and return home well-trained young seamen.

'Not long ago I met a brig on the coast of China, with only one full-grown man before the mast.

'By this system of manning their ships, the expenditure is reduced to a minimum, and the Swedes cut out the English shipping in every direction.

'The deficiency of seamen in England is not caused by insufficient pay. Wages at the present time are very high. Seamen in steamers trading to the Mediterranean are earning 3*l.* 5*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* a month, and are found in addition. Their provisions cost about 10*s.* a week. The only remedy for the present state of things is the revival, in some shape or other, of the practice of taking apprentices, which has unhappily been too generally abandoned.'

It has elsewhere been shown that the higher wages offered in steamers attract all the best seamen; and from this cause the owners of sailing ships bound on long voyages find it difficult to procure good seamen. They esteem themselves fortunate if they can complete their crews with seamen from the North of Europe, without shipping Spaniards or Greeks, who, both in character and skill, are much inferior to our Scandinavian brethren. The recent horrible outrages perpetrated by Greeks and Turks on board British ships will probably deter both commanders from exposing their lives, and shipowners their property, to destruction at the hands of such vile miscreants.

The lower wages are causes of the inferiority of the crews of sailing ships.

Captain Dawson and Captain Murray, in common with many others who have discussed this subject, attribute the diminution in the numbers of trained seamen in the merchant service mainly to the abolition of compulsory apprenticeship. It must however be quite obvious, that the introduction of steam, in substitution for sails, has in part conducted to the present state of things.

Increased use of steam has injured seaman-ship.

The opening of the Suez Canal, and the recent improvements in steam machinery, which, by reducing the consumption of fuel, have made steam power so much more economical than before, have given a new impulse to the construction of steamers.

In his able report on the cruise of the Reserve Fleet Admiral Cooper Key, while giving the Reserve a high meed of praise for their general qualifications, criticises them as slow in their movements both on deck and aloft. This inferiority he attributes to two causes—First, the ships of the mercantile marine are so short-handed, that it is impossible that nautical evolutions can be executed



with the same smartness and celerity as in the Royal Navy. Secondly, sailors constantly employed in steam vessels cannot be equal in activity aloft to the crews of sailing ships, or possess the same skill in handling canvas, as seamen constantly employed in large sailing ships. In the majority of steam vessels only light fore-and-aft sails are used, and even in large mail steamers the principal employment of the deck hands consists in scrubbing and cleaning. All heavy work is done by steam.

In a recent report the Secretary of the United States Navy has recommended the establishment of training-ships for the Navy, on the ground that the introduction of steam has reduced the number of merchant seamen available for the fleet.

Sailing  
ships well  
adapted for  
certain  
trades.

While sailing ships have in many branches of trade given way to steamers, our most recent experience tends to show that sailing vessels will still be employed, especially on long voyages, for the conveyance of the heavier and less valuable goods. In anticipation of an extensive traffic through the Suez Canal, the tonnage of steamers has been increased beyond the actual requirements of shippers of those more costly descriptions of merchandise, for which alone expedition is important. In consequence of the keen competition between rival lines, freights by steamers to India have been barely remunerative, while sailing ships have been enabled to command the same rates of freight as heretofore.

Opinions  
favourable  
to seamen  
of the pre-  
sent day.

It will not be necessary to multiply further evidence against the seamen of the present day. All the most adverse opinions that have come under the notice of the present writer have been unreservedly stated; and it will now be a simple act of justice to the seamen to turn to the more cheering evidence, collected by the Royal Commission and the Consuls at foreign ports.

It has been shown that the official witnesses, and the steam-ship owners, including Mr. Burns of Glasgow and Mr. Wilson of Hull, the largest owners of steam tonnage in the world, spoke in satisfactory terms of the seamen of the merchant service.

Seamen of  
the past  
not satis-  
factory.

It is further to be observed that, when comparisons are instituted between the qualifications of the seamen in present and in former times, a great error is committed when it is taken for granted that, in the earlier part of the century, our ships were efficiently manned. The composition of the crews of the ships which won our great naval victories was unsatisfactory in the extreme. The facts adduced in a paper read by Captain Gardner at the Royal United Service Institution, in May 1871, conclusively prove that the utmost difficulty was experienced in manning the fleet. In 1803 the line-of-battle

ships 'Donegal' and 'Belleisle' went out to the Mediterranean with not more than twenty men in each ship who could take the wheel. After Trafalgar the 'Conqueror' had just eight men on board who could knot a shroud. Had the seamanship of the crews of the French and Spanish ships been as remarkable as the personal courage which they displayed, it would have been difficult, even for the admirable commanders which the English Navy then possessed, to have achieved such distinguished success.

In the great war, impressment having been in force for eighteen years, the system became so odious to the seamen that they were arrayed in unnatural hostility to their native country. Admiral Denman, in his evidence before the Manning Commission, referred to passages in James's *Naval History*, wherein it is recorded that, when the United States frigate 'Macedonian' was captured, every seaman on board the American ship had served from five to twelve years in a British man-of-war. One of the guns on board the 'Macedonian' was called the 'Victory,' because its crew had served under Lord Nelson in that ship. Another gun was called the 'Nelson,' because the gun's crew had belonged to his barge. These men may have been animated by personal loyalty to the famous sea officers, who had so often led them on to victory; but the sentiment of patriotism must have been feeble indeed in a fleet which furnished such numerous crews to the enemies of England. It was stated by Admiral Patton, that many of the seamen paid off in 1802 actually embarked for foreign countries without setting foot on their native shore; and Admiral Griffiths, who quotes this passage from a paper by Admiral Patton, adds that Sir Thomas Trowbridge, then a Lord of the Admiralty, had assured him that our seamen went direct from Portsmouth to join the French fleet to fit out their ships at Brest.

Capture  
of U.S.  
frigate  
'Macedo-  
nian.'

The reckless and undisciplined men of our time are the successors of men as reckless as themselves. 'An experience,' wrote Captain Pierce, 'of upwards of half a century with these men leads me to believe that the habit of wasting their substance remains unaltered. They are not now guilty of the same extravagant follies as formerly; but they are still plundered, robbed and ruined, and as little careful of the morrow, or of what is to become of them in old age, as formerly.'

The cha-  
racter of  
seamen is  
unchanged.

The same disparaging opinions which were so freely pronounced by witnesses before the Commission in 1873 and 1874, have been reiterated with not less confidence, on the occasion of every preceding official inquiry into the state of our seamen. 'I have no hesitation,'



wrote Consul Giffard from Vera Cruz, in 1847, 'in giving my testimony to the falling-off in the character of the British seaman. He is generally overworked, hardly used, and therefore discouraged, unhappy, and ready to fly to other countries for employment.

Sir  
Thomas  
Hastings.

In 1851 Sir Thomas Hastings, in a letter to Earl Minto on our naval organisation, said: 'The demand for seamen, during the operations in Syria, proved clearly that when the country was flourishing, from 4,000 to 5,000 seamen were the utmost that could be obtained by voluntary enlistment, and they will generally be, as they then were, of an inferior description.'

In 1852 Sir William Hall informed Sir William Parker's Committee that when they could obtain their services, masters of merchant ships gladly gave the preference to Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian seamen, owing to their sober habits. The foreigners were more easily managed, and contented with less wages.

That there was at that time a great scarcity of men was, he affirmed, a fact well known and acknowledged. Thousands of men had recently left the country, with the intention of never returning. At Aberdeen, ships, bound for Australia, had entered most of their crew at the nominal wages of 1s. a month, with the agreement that the men should be allowed to leave the ship two days after their arrival at the port of destination. It was most difficult to obtain men for the voyage homewards at 3*l.* a month. In many cases a bonus of 5*l.* had been given to those willing to complete the voyage.

Mr. W.  
Phillipps.

Mr. William Phillipps, the chairman of the London Shipowners' Association, in giving evidence before the same Committee, said: 'The permission to man our ships with foreign seamen would be productive of great good, by establishing a wholesale competition with our own at present demoralised race.'

Admiral  
Elliot.

Again, in 1858, Rear-Admiral George Elliot told the Manning Commission that the character of merchant seamen had very much deteriorated. His experience with regard to merchant seamen had been enlarged from having been eighteen months captain of the port of Gibraltar, a magistrate on shore and on the water, and shipping master. He considered that a man-of-war's man was as superior to a merchant sailor now, in point of seamanship, as they used to consider, whether rightly or wrongly, a merchant sailor was to a man-of-war's man.

Committee  
on Mer-  
chant Ship-  
ping, 1890.

Among the leading witnesses examined by Mr. Lindsay's Committee in 1860, we may refer to Messrs. Gilmour and McKay, ship-owners, and to Captain B. Sproule, as representing the officers of the

merchant service. They all spoke in unfavourable terms of the quality of the seamen.

*Mr. Gilmour was asked* (1134):—‘Do you think that the sailors have deteriorated from what they were ten years ago?—Very much so.’ (1135) ‘In what respect?—They have become deteriorated, and more especially, I think, since the register ticket was done away with, from their continual desertion and the changing of their names; when they desert they change their names, and I think that when any man takes a false name there is very little hope of him; after that he can do almost anything; and the employment on board steamers has also tended to deteriorate the British seaman.’

*Captain B. Sproule was also asked* (3006):—‘Then it is your opinion, from experience, that discipline is better maintained on board foreign ships than on board English ships?—I think so myself, because I am sorry to say that our seamen have deteriorated to such a degree that almost any foreign sailors are better men than ours; they have fallen off dreadfully since the doing away with the apprentice law; we have no sailors now to speak of in the merchant service.’

*And this is Mr. McKay's evidence* (5166, *Mr. Lindsay*):—‘You have given your opinion of the great improvement which has taken place in the officers; how is it as regards the seamen?—I regret to say that they have deteriorated very much.’

In reviewing the evidence taken by successive commissions and committees, it is a noteworthy fact that the tone of opinion varies uniformly with the locality. In the north-eastern ports the seamen appear to be for the most part married men and of more settled habits than the seamen shipped in the ports where the trade is chiefly carried on with distant countries, and where the proportion of coasting vessels is less considerable. From no port did the recent Royal Commission obtain a more general concurrence of opinion as to the inefficiency of seamen than from the port of Cardiff. But I find, in looking back to the evidence taken from the same port on former occasions, that Cardiff is always spoken of in the terms used by Mr. Peake, a former shipping master, ‘as a *dernier ressort*.’ ‘The men,’ he says, ‘that we ship are entire strangers. Seamen are sure to get employment at Cardiff, if they cannot obtain it anywhere else.’

These gloomy descriptions of the merchant seamen have been relieved in former days, as now, by favourable opinions from other sources. Going back to 1847, the date of Lord Ellenborough's Commission on Pensions, we find Mr Richard Green stating that, in his view, the British seaman was improving:—

‘Is it your opinion that the character of British merchant seamen

Local distinctions of character among seamen.

Favourable opinion of Mr. Green.



is, upon the whole, better or worse than it was within your own recollection?—I should say decidedly better.

‘More moral and more prudent?—More moral and more prudent, and less punishment on board ship.

‘And less drunkenness?—And less drunkenness.

‘Are they also a healthier and stouter class of men?—I should say that they are.

‘Have you abler ships’ crews than you had?—Certainly.’

Committee  
of 1852.

So, too, among the recruiting officers examined by Sir William Parker’s Committee in 1852, many were found to express themselves well satisfied with the men recently entered for the Navy.

‘Do you think a better description of men now enter than before?—I consider the new race of seamen now springing up more intelligent than they were formerly.’

Captain Bevis, the Recruiting Officer at Liverpool, was equally well satisfied with the men obtained. To the question, ‘Do you think a better description of men now enter than before?’ he replied, ‘Men of all descriptions offer themselves, and amongst them there is a better description of men than before.’

Mr. Green, when examined by the Manning Committee in 1852, expressed the same favourable opinion which he had given, five years before, to Lord Ellenborough’s Commission. He said, ‘I have only experienced a difficulty in getting one ship manned out of twenty-eight during the last twelvemonth, and that was at a time when seamen were unusually scarce.’ Being asked, ‘Do you obtain as good a description of able-bodied seamen as formerly?’ he replied, ‘I obtain as good a description of able-bodied seamen as formerly. The character of the British seaman has improved of late; he is more steady and prudent, and better educated, and he still retains his ability as a seaman.’

The general result of the evidence taken by Sir William Parker’s Committee was such, that in their final Report they say: ‘We are happy to be able to bear testimony, from our own knowledge as well as from the evidence which we have received, to the improved moral character of our seamen, whether in the Royal or merchant navy, more especially as to their sobriety, much of which is undoubtedly to be attributed to the recent diminution in the quantity of spirits issued in the Royal Navy, and to the increased number of temperance ships in the merchant service. At the same time, we believe the British seaman to be as hardy, skilful, and daring as ever, and that in proportion to the increase in their value and efficiency, is the moral obligation to hold out every encouragement to them.’

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Seven years later, we find that many witnesses before the Manning Commission reported favourably of the seamen. Mr. Towson, of Liverpool, spoke of the condition of merchant seamen at that port, as in all respects satisfactory and improving greatly. In comparison with the American navy the improvement had been immense in the last eight years.

It has already been pointed out that the opinions of witnesses vary, according to the localities from which they come. Mr. Mackenzie, a witness before the Manning Commission, was of opinion that 'the character of the men had improved very much of late years, judging from their demeanour in the shipping office, and the advantage they took of the money-order system. At the Hartlepoons there was a further evidence of this improvement in the extent to which they have become members of the benefit clubs.'

The character of seamen varies in different ports.

Mr. Hudson, another witness from the north-eastern ports, confirmed the opinion of Mr. Mackenzie. He said:—'The north port sailors are of a different class altogether from what you find either in London or in Liverpool. We always had an improved class in the northern ports; their pay has always been better.'

For evidence as to the condition of seamen generally, at the period under review, I may once more refer to the opinion of Captain Pierce, the superintendent of the London Sailors' Home. In a paper, published in the Appendix to the Report of the Manning Commission, he said that '96,710 seamen had been boarders at the Sailors' Home during the last twenty-three years,' and he thus expresses his opinion of the seamen:—'My experience at the Sailors' Home, where, on some occasions, 350 of these men have been living at one time, induces the belief that a large proportion of them are orderly, well-conducted seamen, who, after performing long and arduous voyages, receive their wages, proceed home, spending their money among their relatives and friends, and then return to London, Liverpool, and other large ports, to enter on other foreign voyages.'

Captain Pierce, R.N.

From the Manning Commission, let us turn to the evidence taken by Mr. Lindsay's Committee. Some of the witnesses who had given evidence on previous inquiries were consulted once more, and the following are some of the more important opinions obtained.

Mr. Lindsay's Committee.

Mr. C. Wigram said:—'I never tried the sailors of any other country, except Lascars, and I certainly get more out of a British sailor than out of a Lascar.'

Mr. C. Wigram.

Mr. Wigram's opinion of the superiority of the British seaman to the Lascar was confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Eustace Smith. 'We take,' he said, 'five Lascars to replace two British seamen.' The

Mr. Eustace Smith.

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general opinion is in favour of Lascars in warm weather, but, when they get into the Channel in cold weather, they are very helpless.'

Admiral  
Sir Bar-  
tholomew  
Sullivan.

I conclude the reference to the evidence taken by Mr. Lindsay's Committee with the following quotation from Sir Bartholomew Sullivan:—'As to the condition of our merchant seamen, I heard an opinion expressed that they had deteriorated: now my own opinion is that that is not the case further than that accidentally it might be the case, through the falling off of apprentices of late years. Between the old compulsory apprenticeship system and the present system of the voluntary principle, so large a number of apprentices were not for some years entered, and, therefore, the seamen entered during those years have not been so good a class as those thoroughly trained up as apprentices; but that will rectify itself.'

Consular  
Reports on  
Seamen,  
1872.

The next link in the chain of evidence is furnished by the Consular Reports, from which we have already freely quoted, published in the Parliamentary Paper of 1872. Speaking in general terms of the effect of the evidence collected through the Board of Trade circulars, Mr. Thomas Gray, of the Board of Trade, in his evidence before the Duke of Somerset's Commission, said:—'I could produce Consuls' letters, which we received in 1847, showing the then state of the British mercantile marine. You would be surprised, and the country at large would be surprised, to compare the opinions expressed in 1847 with the opinions received from Consuls in 1870, as to the character of the British mercantile marine. The improvement is something that nobody could credit, unless he has an opportunity of referring to papers that are within the knowledge of our department.'

That the statement of Mr. Gray was a faithful summary of the opinion of a large number of the Consuls, will be clearly seen from a perusal of the following extracts from the Consular Reports.

*Consul W. T. Smith, of Savannah.*—'The most part are well clothed, seem well fed and taken care of; most of the seamen can sign their names, and appear intelligent.'

*Consul W. A. White, of Dantzic.*—'The large majority of them, and specially the men belonging to the Naval Reserve, I believe to be a highly respectable class.'

*Consul Charles Rennie, of Archangel.*—'The general condition of British seamen who come under my notice is good, particularly that of Royal Naval Volunteers.'

*Consul H. S. Ongley, of Patras.*—'The British seamen that come to this place are, on the whole, well behaved.'

*Consul Thomas Mitchell, of St. Petersburg.*—'The general con-



dition of seamen who come under my notice is good, and there is no crimping here.'

*Consul Denis Donohoe, of New Orleans.*—'The British seamen are as good as those of any other nation.'

*Consul M. Yeats Brown, of Genoa.*—'The seamen on board steamers and large vessels are generally steady, well-conducted men, as are also those belonging to the fish trade vessels, which are generally manned by crews belonging to one village, and therefore knowing one another and taking a certain amount of interest in one another and in the vessel, while those on board the colliers are of an inferior class, morally and physically. There is, however, I should say, on the whole, a decided improvement in the condition, education, and conduct of British seamen within the last ten or twelve years.'

'Independently of the fact that steamers stay far less time in the harbour than sailing vessels, the men are of a better class, as the masters have the pick of men at home, and constantly keep the same men voyage after voyage.'

'It would tend very much to the improvement of seamen, if shipowners generally could arrange to give continuous employment to well-conducted seamen.'

*Consul J. Hannay, of Barcelona.*—'The conduct of British seamen at this port is, on the whole, good, and they give little trouble to the Consulate. Acts of violence are rare.'

*Acting-Consul A. A. Annesley, of Nagasaki.*—'The general appearance of British seamen who come under my notice is that of healthy and well-fed men.'

The unfavourable observations of the Consuls apply for the most part to the crews of sailing ships. It has been pointed out elsewhere that the terms and conditions of service in sailing ships are less liberal than in the steam trade.

In steam-ships the crews give no ground for complaint. The report from the British Consul at Portland may be quoted as representing the general view. 'There are,' it is observed, 'many important reasons why men on board steam-ships give less trouble than others. The voyages occupy a shorter time, the wages are more frequently settled, the work on board is not so severe, the men do not get tired and sick of each other, which generally occurs on board sailing vessels on long voyages or under long agreements. The masters frequently become morose and ill-tempered from being

Crews of  
steamers



more or less isolated, and often give way to drinking, which soon subverts all discipline on board.'

Summary  
of Consular  
Reports.

The opinions of the whole Consular body may be summarised thus. Opinions unfavourable to the British seaman were given by the Consuls at Antwerp, Christiania, Naples, Smyrna, Riga, Mobile, Marseilles, Memel, Amsterdam, Alexandria, Dantzic, Oporto, Para, the Dardanelles, Portland, Callao, Pernambuco, and Monte Video. Favourable opinions were given by the Consuls at Barcelona, Genoa, Lisbon, New Orleans, Savannah, Odessa, San Francisco, St. Petersburg, Patras, Stockholm, Archangel, and the ports in Japan.

Messrs.  
Gray and  
Hamilton's  
Report.

Next in order of time we shall refer to the report on the Supply of British Seamen, by Mr. Gray and Mr. Hamilton, of the Board of Trade, which was presented to Parliament in 1872. The language of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade has been generally favourable to the seamen, although, as the following extracts prove, it must be admitted that it has not always been consistent.

In this report, Messrs Gray and Hamilton use the following language:—'Our practical conclusions, therefore, are, that for the purposes of our mercantile marine no case is made out for the interference of Government to increase the number, or improve the quality, of seamen serving on board British merchant ships; and that nothing need be done for undertaking the special education of persons going to sea, as merchant seamen, with a view to making them fit for the Royal Naval Reserve, until it has been first shown that there are not among our merchant seamen and fishermen at the present time an adequate number sufficiently good for the purpose.'

Subsequent  
speeches by  
Mr. Gray.

After an interval, however, of only two years, Mr. Gray, at a meeting of shipowners at Liverpool, spoke in much less glowing terms of the qualities of our merchant seamen. 'There is,' he said, 'undoubtedly in the mercantile marine an immense waste through the unseaworthiness of seamen. Men were shipped, who were utterly unfit to go to sea from their physical condition.'

'The question of the supply of seamen to the mercantile marine was not a small one, and must be taken up from a comprehensive point of view.' Again, at a meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Mr. Gray said that 'the question of loss of life at sea was not a question of unseaworthiness of ships as much as of the unseaworthiness of seamen.'

It has already been stated that the leading steam-ship owners,

who gave evidence before the Duke of Somerset's Commission, spoke highly of the seamen. Among these witnesses we may refer especially to Mr. Burns, who said:—‘We have 3,000 able seamen always afloat. Our sailors are as good to-day as they have ever been.’

Steamship  
owners  
satisfied  
with sea-  
men.

Another most experienced and impartial witness, Captain Furnell, for twenty-one years the superintendent of a shipping office in London, said that he did not believe that our seamen had deteriorated. In 1873, there were shipped at his office 17,000 seamen, 1,800 mates, and 1,100 apprentices. An officer who has retired from the sea to take charge of such a vast amount of business, must have the best opportunities of forming an opinion, and appointed as he is to do equal justice between the seamen and their employers, his judgment may be accepted with the more implicit confidence, as likely to be unprejudiced. Captain Furnell said that ‘when in command himself he had had the greatest difficulties to get his men on board. He had gone down to Gravesend with few men sober on board.’ With respect to Swedes and Norwegians, Captain Furnell was of opinion that they were first-class men as long as they did not form the majority of the crew of a British ship, in which case they were likely to be most troublesome, finding fault with, and growling at everything. It is satisfactory to learn from such a source, that the seamen, though few in number, in comparison with the increase in shipping, have not deteriorated in character, while on the other hand they have improved in education.

Captain  
Furnell.

Mr. Lindsay, in his *History of Merchant Shipping*, described the mode in which the engagement of the seamen was formerly conducted:—‘In most cases the whole arrangement was left to shipping-masters, who were paid so much a head for each man they engaged, and were responsible for their appearance on board at the time of sailing. The crews were generally assembled by them two or three days, sometimes only one day, before the ship sailed; neither the master nor owner, too frequently, knowing anything of the men before the vessel went to sea. Occasionally the seaman saw the ship before he joined her, but often not. In Liverpool, however, when the men were unable to obtain employment for themselves, they registered their names at an office opened for that purpose, whence the captain chose his crew. Moreover, it was no uncommon thing to see them taken to the ship's side in cartloads, in such a state of intoxication that they were unable to walk on board. Riggers generally had charge of the vessel up to that time. In London the practice for owners of vessels going on voyages round the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn, was to employ an agent, familiarly known as a crimp,

Mr. Lind-  
say on  
shipping  
the crew.

who engaged the greater part of the crew. If ten or twenty men were wanted, perhaps double that number were brought on board, out of which the chief mate selected a sufficient company, the agent receiving a note for two months' wages, a portion of which he had generally advanced previously to the seaman, either in cash or in slops, and also 5s., his procuration fee.' It may be gathered from this description, that the condition of the seaman was certainly not altered for the worse by the legislation of 1854.

Opinion of  
Quarterly  
Reviewer,  
January  
1876.

A summary of the evidence taken by the Duke of Somerset's Commission is contained in an article on 'Merchant Shipping' in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1876:—

'Special temptations to drunkenness, debauchery, desertion, and insubordination have always existed, and have at all times been the despair of the philanthropist and the legislator. And when statements are freely made concerning the recent deterioration of seamen, it is scarcely possible to adopt any standard by which to judge whether these evils are greater or less now than they formerly were. The evidence before the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships consists chiefly of individual opinion, which is in itself of little value, nor is it at all in the same direction. The opinions of the Consuls in reply to Mr. Lefevre's circular of 1869, like those of the witnesses before the Royal Commission, differ, but the larger numbers are decidedly unfavourable. Out of about thirty-five, who give a positive opinion, two-thirds at least think the condition of the seamen bad, if not worse, than it formerly was; and drunkenness, desertion, quarrelling, and insubordination figure largely in their reports. One bright feature, however, there is. In all these reports, except two or three, a very favourable account is given of the crews of steamers. These appear on the whole to be steady, well-conducted men, who seldom desert, and give very little trouble. And this becomes an extremely important feature in the case, when it is considered how large a proportion they form of the whole service. In 1874 the number of men, employed in British merchant ships in the trade of the United Kingdom, exclusive of masters, was 203,606, and out of these the number employed in steamers was 74,843, a number forming a third of the whole, and constantly increasing in proportion.

'Some other facts are clear. It is certain that the number of men employed in proportion to the tonnage, is less now than it was formerly, and that it is becoming still less. The proportion of men to each 100 tons was in 1852 for sailing ships, 4.55; and for steamers 8.04. In 1874 the proportion was for sailing ships 3.19; and for steamers 4.10.



'It is also clear that the supply of young sailors in the form of apprentices is rather falling off than increasing. The number of new apprenticeships enrolled in 1850 was 5,055; in 1860, 5,616; in 1870, 4,241; and in 1874, 4,445.

'Under the circumstances it is difficult to say whether the condition of seamen is better or worse, on the whole, than it was in 1850. It was not satisfactory then, and it is not satisfactory now. The growth of steam has separated seamen into classes more distinctly than was formerly the case. And there is probably in this employment, as in others, a less abundant supply of efficient men in proportion to the demands of the trade now than there was then.

'The evils which beset the seaman are notorious—want of education, want of homes, crimping, drunkenness, debauchery, disease, and insubordination. The measures which have been suggested are—improved training, a pension fund, prohibition of advance of wages, prompt and early payment of wages, further protection against crimps on landing, the extension to merchant seamen of that protection against contagious disease which has proved so valuable to sailors and soldiers in the public service, and further provisions for maintenance of discipline in foreign ports—an object of great importance, and one which can only be attained by means of consular conventions with other countries.'

Shipowners generally may be disposed to regard the organisation of unions or protective societies as tending to promote insubordination, rather than as an indication of an improvement amongst seamen; and it may be that the strength derived from united action may sometimes be employed in the furtherance of objects which are equally disadvantageous to the seaman and to his employer. If, however, we may rely on the written and spoken declarations of the responsible officers of these unions, we cannot but admire the principles by which they profess themselves to be guided. The following observations occur in a letter from the President of the London Seamen's Mutual Protection Society to the author, dated June 7, 1875:—'We are the very antipodes of trade unions, although forced to be enrolled under that Act. Strikes are our abhorrence, and the first principle laid down is to make good men, and that the owners' property is the first care of a member of this society to see to; and in case of disaster at sea, the lives and safety of women and children, and also male passengers, are to be seen to before the member's own.'

Self-help  
among sea-  
men.

I may conclude by briefly stating the result of my own experience. The voyages in which I have been concerned, not being con-



Impres-  
sions de-  
rived from  
my per-  
sonal ex-  
perience.

ducted for commercial objects, it may be thought that the experience thus obtained would throw little light on the state of affairs in the mercantile marine. I may, however, remark that in a voyage on the coasts of North America in 1872, I visited Quebec and New York, two of the ports where the activity and evil influence of the crimps have furnished the greatest cause of complaint.

At Quebec, my vessel was moored to the booms for ten days, and although there were constant facilities for access to the shore, and to those parts of the town which offer the greatest temptations to seamen, I had no cause whatever of complaint during the whole of my stay at the port. The same remarks would apply to the discipline of the crew during a long visit to New York.

The conduct of the British seaman in tempestuous weather at sea has rarely furnished cause of complaint to shipmasters and shipowners. The seamanlike qualities and courage of our nation are generally displayed whenever an emergency arises. Speaking from my own experience of many gales at sea, I have ever found the British seaman ready to do his duty.

Opinions  
differ  
widely.

It will be evident from what has been already said, that the widest possible differences of opinion exist with reference to the efficiency of the British seaman at the present time. A comparison of the character and skill of the seamen of the present day with the same class, as it is conceived to have been forty years ago, always gives rise to divergent opinion among shipowners and ship captains. As a general rule, it will be found that the complaints proceed from ship captains advanced in years, and from the owners of sailing ships. Old captains and shipowners, in common with all aged persons in other walks of life, are prone to extol the men and the things of the past, and to disparage unduly their later contemporaries. At the time of the earlier Parliamentary inquiries, unfavourable opinions with reference to seamen were as strongly expressed as they are to-day. Thus, Sir William Hall assured the Manning Committee of 1852, that the conduct of British seamen was so bad, that in many instances merchants gave the preference to freighting foreign ships. And again, in 1860, Mr. Beasley, of Liverpool, whose interest in the manning question has never flagged, made the same complaints to Mr. Lindsay's Commission on Merchant Shipping, which have of late been so repeatedly renewed. He enlarged on the difficulty of obtaining efficient crews, and on the desirability of establishing training-ships under the auspices of the Government. Then, as now, the disparaging statements on the one side were refuted by the more favourable opinions of other witnesses.

It would be unsafe to yield a too ready deference to the opinions of shipowners, engaged in an ever-recurring struggle to keep down expenditure. Their tendency necessarily is to exaggerate the difficulties of the hour, and forget all that they have had to contend with in years gone by. Opinions formed under such conditions cannot be perfectly impartial.

In my judgment, a more reasonable conclusion, on the much debated question of the deterioration of the British seaman, is conveyed in the able observations of Sir Philip Francis, our Consul-General at Constantinople, in reply to the circular of 1872:—

Sir Philip  
Francis.

‘The general condition of British seamen must be one of comparison and doubt. Whilst many people are inclined to magnify the merits of the days gone by and the men of former generations, others see progress with a sanguine eye, and unduly despise old times and fashions. The general habit here, however, is to declare that the British seaman has degenerated. My personal experience runs over a period of ten years only, and my opinion is, I fear, of small value, yet I think it is true that the character of the British seaman, whether better or worse than formerly, is open to improvement.

‘There is, from the nature of the business, a disposition for vagabonds to volunteer into the trade, not that they like the sea, but they wish to escape from the land. The sea affords a reckless or unlucky man, whether much or little acquainted with the duties of a ship, an opportunity to get board and lodging, and obtain a small advance for necessities.

‘Masters are also glad to hire men at small wages, and so frequently an indifferent crew is got together, which are neither fit for nor satisfied with its work.

‘In the same fore-castle, *e.g.*, may meet, amongst a crew of eight or nine, an escaped pickpocket, a fugitive poacher, and reduced field preacher. But this has always been so, more or less, and a handy man may soon pick up enough knowledge of his work to get along, if he has heart in it; but few of the class I am referring to desire anything else than to escape other evils to which they were exposed at home. The class of ships which come to this port, ships which have brought coal from Cardiff and Newcastle, and which return with corn, is not a very high one, and we probably see here not the best class of sailors. Again, there is an admixture of foreigners not always of the best class. But notwithstanding all the unfavourable remarks which are made on the British sailor of the present day—his addiction to drink, discontent, and venereal disease, there are

excellent qualities among the class; and with the better provisions now made for their comfort on board, and at sailors' homes on shore, I see no reason why they should deteriorate.'

W. S.  
Lindsay,  
vol. iii.  
p. 508.

Another independent view is contained in the recent publications of Mr. W. S. Lindsay. He shares the opinions of Sir Philip Francis. 'It is not the case, as it has been alleged, that either our ships, or the officers by which they are navigated, have deteriorated. On the contrary, they have, within the last quarter of a century, vastly improved in almost every respect. It may be that our seamen do not "hand, reef, and steer," with the same alacrity as they did in the days of our forefathers, simply because such duties are less required now than they were then; but our masters and mates are infinitely superior to what they were a short time since, and in our regular lines of steamers and packet-ships there are to be found a class of seamen much more sober and steady than could be found in any merchant service twenty-five years ago. Men now exist, who are quite as competent for the duties required of them as any seamen of the days of Duncan or Nelson, and far more to be depended on for the performance of their duties on board of merchant ships, than was the case in my own boyhood, although there are still far too many who are inefficient, drunken, and worthless.'

Deteriora-  
tion of sea-  
men not  
proven.

On the whole, it would appear that the alleged deterioration of the British seaman is not conclusively established. If too many sailors go on board their ships under the influence of liquor, they did the same in years gone by; and, on the other hand, in more recent times very many sailors have become total abstainers. Even if it be true that the general standard of excellence is lower, it is not likely that the remedy will be found in more active intervention on the part of the Government. In point of fact, those shipowners who entertain the least favourable view of the present race of seamen refer the commencement of the process of deterioration to the Merchant Shipping legislation of 1854. The effect of that Act, it has been urged, has been to destroy, in a large measure, the confidence which formerly existed, and which it is so desirable to foster and strengthen, between the sailor, the captain, and the shipowner. 'I remember,' said Mr. Lamport, in his evidence before the Duke of Somerset, 'the late Mr. Graves stating that he could not account for the deterioration of sailors during the last sixteen years. I called attention to the fact that Mr. Graves had spotted the very time when the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 came into operation. I do believe the effect of legislation, which began with that Act, has been very much to injure the moral character of seamen. It has



destroyed the confidence between the sailor, his officers, his captain, and his owner.' The rapid growth of the shipping, which has been described as so oppressed and harassed, suggests an obvious explanation of the difficulty of procuring seamen in those branches of the trade where the wages are fixed on the lowest scale, and the work is exceptionally arduous.

Although the amount of business conducted in sailing vessels still causes a great demand for seamen, the building of vessels of this class is not maintained with such increasing activity as the building of steamers, and there is reason to believe that from all the short voyage trades the sailing vessel will ultimately disappear.

Substitution of steamers for sailing ships.

The effect of the introduction of steamers into our coasting trade, which was formerly our principal nursery of seamen, was predicted by many of the witnesses before the Committee on Merchant Shipping in 1860. Mr. George Marshall told the Committee that the sailing vessels would be driven out of the coast trade by steamers, and he gave a remarkable illustration of the diminished employment for seamen and apprentices, which must necessarily ensue. 'A friend of mine had eighteen sailing vessels, colliers, employed in the coal trade between the northern ports and London, and those eighteen ships were navigated by 180 men, upon an average of ten each; and I should say that in every one of those eighteen ships there would be four or five boy apprentices, who, after serving three or four years afloat, would become able seamen. My friend has sold the whole of those ships, and substituted for them two screw colliers. The two screw colliers bring the same quantity of coals to London in twelve months as the eighteen sailing ships did; and those two screw colliers are navigated, I should say, with seven men in each and no apprentices, and those seven men are some of them very indifferent sailors, for they do not require in steamers first-rate men; they only require a few to steer. Now it must be apparent what will be the state of our nursery for seamen when steamers have been generally substituted for sailing ships. Here we see fourteen men doing the work of 180, and not an apprentice is employed.'

It must, indeed, be admitted that the tendency of modern changes in naval architecture, in its application to merchant ships, has been to check the increase in the employment of seamen, which, but for recent inventions, would of necessity have occurred.

Number of seamen employed.

There seems to be a growing inclination on the part of owners to employ vessels of larger tonnage than formerly; but an increase in the size of vessels does not imply a proportionate increase in the

number of hands required on board. From the subjoined figures it will be seen that, although there has been an increase of nearly 500,000 tons in the amount of British shipping engaged in the home and foreign trades during the last five years, the total number of vessels so employed has decreased by 1,128, while the number of men and boys employed has remained almost stationary :—

	Vessels	Tons	Men and boys employed
1878	20,094	6,236,124	195,585
1879	20,029	6,249,833	193,548
1880	19,972	6,344,577	192,972
1881	19,311	6,490,953	192,903
1882	18,966	6,715,030	195,937

Seamen  
aspire to  
become  
certificated  
officers.

The diffusion of education has made it practicable for a much greater number of seamen to obtain a sufficient knowledge of navigation to pass the examinations instituted by the Board of Trade. Many of the most valuable men before the mast obtain certificates, and their promotion to the quarter-deck of necessity tends to diminish the number of able seamen ; and thus, while there is an insufficient supply of good working hands, the number of certificated officers is in excess of the demand. In former times, when education was less widely diffused, fewer candidates from the fore-castle would have aspired to advancement to a higher grade.

Ordinary  
seamen  
have taken  
the places  
of appren-  
tices.

The alarm which has been raised at the prospect of a falling off in the supply of seamen has probably been exaggerated. True it is that the numbers apprenticed and enrolled show a marked tendency to reduction since the system of compulsory apprenticeship was abolished. There are, however, a large number of boys afloat, who, although not regularly apprenticed to shipowners, are coming forward as the future seamen of the mercantile marine. Their training may not be so systematic as it ought to be, but, where they are fortunate enough to be under the care of a captain, anxious for their welfare, and they are associated with seamen, who take a pleasure in instructing them in their art (and many such captains and many such seamen are to be found), the boys are learning their business quite as effectually as if they had been regularly apprenticed to the sea. Owing to the abolition of compulsory apprenticeship, few boys are now apprenticed to shipowners, unless they are intended to become officers in the merchant service. The greater number of the able seamen of the mercantile marine have been reared without passing through a regular apprenticeship, yet it is impossible to prove that there has been any deterioration in seamen,

regularly employed in sailing ships, either in character, in skill, or in physical power. Our sailing ships make quicker passages, and they are manned by fewer hands than were considered necessary in former days. In steam vessels the difference is even greater than in sailing vessels. The average proportion of men to one hundred tons in the foreign trade was 7.69 in 1854, 5.51 in 1865, 3.70 in 1875, 2.95 in 1880, and 2.72 in 1882. This reduction of the crews does not lead to the conclusion that our seamen are inferior, either in strength or in skill, to their predecessors.

A seaman, constantly employed in a jury-rigged steamer, after a certain interval, must necessarily lose his skill in the handling of canvas. But we have no reason to suppose that seamen, if they were constantly employed in sailing ships, and were selected with the same care, and paid the same wages, as the men employed in steamers, would be inferior to the mariners of former times.

Seamen  
under the  
same con-  
ditions as  
ever.

To take an illustration familiar to the present writer, let comparison be made between the skill and seamanship of the crews of our large and increasing pleasure fleet and the performances of years gone by. The handsome racing schooners, which are brought together in every favourite resort of our yachtsmen, are the creation of recent years. By the science of our shipbuilders and sailmakers acting under the direction of a few clever yachtsmen, and by the admirable seamanship of the numerous fishermen whom they employ, the sailing powers of schooners have made a rapid and remarkable advance. Formerly it was a rare, now it is a common, achievement for a schooner to compete with success against a cutter. Year by year larger yachts are being built, with spars more ponderous, and with greater area of canvas. No difficulty whatever is experienced in finding competent masters and fine crews for these vessels, and we seem justified in drawing the conclusion that, in the more important department of the mercantile marine, a seaman, placed in the same condition as his predecessors, is not inferior either in discipline or in skill.

Yachts.

I have spared no pains to acquaint myself with the facts of the case, and the many widely different opinions which prevail on the subject; and it is my firm conviction, after a careful and, I trust, an impartial examination of the evidence brought forward by those who entertain a less sanguine opinion, that the falling off in the quality and the character of our seamen is confined chiefly to the men employed in long-voyage sailing ships. The seamen are not deteriorated, though unhappily the faults and failings of former days are still too prevalent. There is, therefore, large room for improvement, and it



will be a reflection on our age of advanced civilisation, if nothing effectual is accomplished for their amelioration. Mr. Plimsoll succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of the public in the sailor's behalf, and it is earnestly to be desired that the force derived from popular feeling should be directed into practical channels for improving the lot of a class of men who are surrounded by many unfavourable conditions.

Sailors spend their life, for the most part, far removed from the best influences which can elevate human nature—far from their native land, far from their hearths and homes, on the broad and lonely sea, where the authority of the magistrate cannot reach, where public opinion is unfelt and the Sabbath bell is unheard.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE PRESENT CONDITION OF OUR SEAMEN.

THE most recent discussion on the efficiency of our seamen took place at a public meeting held at Liverpool in October, 1880, on the occasion of the dissolution of the Committee of Inquiry into the condition of our seamen, which had laboured for ten years most assiduously for their moral elevation and professional advancement. In this excellent work Lord Ravensworth, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Lord Sandon, Messrs. Beazley, Balfour, Bushell, Ismay, and Williamson, have taken a prominent part. Their measures have at last been crowned with a large measure of success, and the following report of the proceedings at the meeting will be read with interest.

Mr. Christopher Bushell occupied the chair, and Mr. Williamson, who had acted as Secretary to the Committee from its first appointment, gave a full statement of the steps which had been taken to carry out the objects of the Association.

‘For years prior to the formation of the Committee of Inquiry, the condition of the seamen of our mercantile marine was generally regarded as one demanding remedial measures at the hands of the Legislature, and when, in anticipation of the Merchant Shipping Code Bill to be brought before Parliament, under the auspices of Mr. Bright, Mr. J. G. Shaw-Lefevre, and Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Lefevre visited Liverpool at the end of 1869, a number of gentlemen interested in the seamen question had an interview with him, and pressed the claims of seamen on his attention. To quote from the first Report of the Committee:—

Liverpool  
Committee  
of Inquiry.

A number of merchants, shipowners, and steam-ship owners, interested in the seamen of our mercantile marine, had an interview with Mr. Lefevre, Secretary to the Board of Trade, when that gentleman was in Liverpool in November last, in connection with the ‘Amended Merchant Shipping Bill’ to be brought before Parliament. Some doubt having been expressed as to the existence of the alleged deterioration of our seamen, an association was thereupon formed to inquire into the matter, with a view of eliciting facts and opinions that would prove of service to the Government in legislating

First Re-  
port.

on the part of the Bill having reference to seamen. This Association had not in view the revision of the whole Bill, but it seemed to those who first moved in the matter that this particular and most important subject, demanding a great amount of consideration and inquiry of itself, and referred to in only one or two clauses of the Bill, could not have the necessary attention devoted to it by Associations undertaking the revision of a Bill of over 800 clauses. The Committee, while giving these several Associations the benefit of the information obtained, hoped that when considering the clauses alluded to, such information will have due weight with them, and also that the publication of the result of these inquiries will stir up an interest in the subject in all our large seaports.

Members  
of Com-  
mittee.

This Association or Committee consisted of the following gentlemen, from which it will be observed there was a fair representation of leading interests in its constitution:—

*Committee.*

Robert Alexander, Esq.	James Hall, Esq., of Newcastle.
Bryce Allan, Esq.	Captain Judkins.
R. G. Allan, Esq.	James Macdonald, Esq.
Alexander Balfour, Esq.	David MacIver, Esq.
Captain Ballantyne.	Philip Nelson, Esq.
James Beazley, Esq.	P. H. Rathbone, Esq.
Christopher Bushell, Esq.	T. R. Shallcross, Esq.
Francis Clint, Esq.	A. T. Squarey, Esq.
Henry Duckworth, Esq.	H. J. Ward, Esq.
A. B. Forwood, Esq.	S. Williamson, Esq.
Robert Galloway, Esq.	John Williamson, Esq.
T. H. Ismay, Esq.	

John Williamson, *Hon. Sec.*

Queries  
issued.

‘A Sub-Committee was appointed, who issued the following List of Queries to all the shipowners, steam-ship owners, and shipmasters of the port—the latter principally members of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, viz.—

*Queries.*

- 1. Have you in the course of your experience observed any marked change in the seamen of our mercantile marine—either in the way of deterioration or improvement, in the following respects, viz.—

As regards their efficiency in seamanship, as well as in habits of subordination, &c.

and

As regards their physical condition, powers of endurance, &c.?

- 2. If you have noticed any change in the quality of our seamen—to what cause or reason do you attribute this?



3. Can you adduce any facts in support of your opinions? If so, please name them. Or are your conclusions based on observation and experience only?

4. Have you any suggestions to make by which the condition of our seamen may be improved, and the service made more attractive?

5. Can you throw out any suggestions how the supply of sailors of an efficient kind may be increased?

The replies to these queries were analysed and tabulated, and recommendations founded thereupon. These were embodied in the first report of the Committee, issued in March, 1870, which concluded with the following observations:—

In view of the paramount importance of those sections of the Merchant Shipping Code relating to manning and discipline in the mercantile marine, and considering the great interests at stake, not only respecting shipowners as a class, but the whole commerce of the country and the maintenance of our maritime supremacy, your Sub-Committee is strongly of opinion that the whole of Part II.—viz., ‘The Masters and Seamen’s Act’—of said Bill should be referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons,

JOHN WILLIAMSON, *Hon. Sec.*

Liverpool, March 31, 1870.

The following resolution of the Committee was then acted upon:—

That copies of the report be forwarded to the leading Chambers of Commerce in the United Kingdom, as well as to associations interested in the question, asking that the report shall be considered and its recommendations adopted. Also, that copies be sent to all the Members of the Legislature, with a letter urging their support in Parliament to the suggestions of the report, and that they would use their influence in having the Bill referred to a Select Committee of the House.

And thereupon commenced that long period of incessant work in endeavouring to enlist the sympathies of shipowners and Parliament in the question, until our efforts were crowned with success in the passing of the Payment of Wages and Rating Bill this year by Parliament.

‘The suggestions for the improvement of our seamen embodied in the first report were as follow:—

1. That seamen before being rated as A.B. should obtain a certificate of competency.

2. That advance notes be rendered illegal.

3. That sailors’ boarding-houses should be licensed and under inspection, and no such boarding-houses be in connection with beer-houses or public-houses.

4. That an alteration be made in our Consular system abroad, whereby Consuls should be prohibited from taking fees on the shipment or discharge of seamen.

First suggestions for improvement of seamen.

5. That our Government be requested to enter into correspondence with foreign Governments, with a view to putting down the crimping systems abroad.

6. That in order to obtain efficient supplies of good seamen the Government provide and support training-ships in sufficient number at all our large seaports, and that Government should encourage as much as possible the apprenticeship system.

7. That a compulsory Benefit Fund for Seamen be established.

‘I may here mention that subsequently, and as more light was thrown on the subject, we abandoned the idea of a certificate of competency for A.B. rating, and instead of it adopted a sea service qualification of not under four years. Also, after 1875-76 we gave up all idea of pressing for a compulsory benefit fund for seamen, and also the suggestion that Government should provide and support training-ships; we got no encouragement to hope that there was any prospect of our views being adopted by Parliament, as the sequel will show. But to revert to my narrative.

‘The recommendations of the Committee received very general approval from most of the public bodies to whom they had been sent, and many of them supported the Committee by petitioning Parliament that Part II.—viz., the Masters and Seamen’s Act of the Merchant Shipping Code Bill—be referred to a Select Committee of the House. The Committee, by deputation and otherwise, submitted its views to the Board of Trade. The Bill was ultimately withdrawn.

1871.  
Merchant  
Shipping  
Code Bill.

‘In 1871 another Merchant Shipping Code Bill was brought in by Mr. Chichester Fortescue and Mr. Arthur Peel, but, as it did not deal with the condition of seamen, the Committee used all means, by deputation, petition, and otherwise, to have Part II., Masters and Seamen’s Act, referred to a Select Committee or Royal Commission. This Bill was ultimately withdrawn.

1872.  
Visit of  
Mr. Gray  
to ports.

‘Next year, 1872, Mr. Chichester Fortescue, President of the Board of Trade, deputed Mr. Thomas Gray, Assistant Secretary of the Marine Department, to visit the various seaports, to ascertain, amongst other matters, the views and opinions of shipowners, &c., on the seamen question. A meeting was held in the Mercantile Marine Service Association Rooms, on August 30, to meet Mr. Gray, there being a large attendance of shipowners, shipmasters, merchants, and others, at which the following resolutions were passed:—

That this meeting is convinced that the present condition of the seamen of our mercantile marine is most unsatisfactory, and that it is desirable

measures be taken to provide our mercantile marine with good and efficient seamen.

That, after having heard Mr. Gray, this meeting pledges itself to support the Government in any comprehensive and practicable scheme for the much-needed increased supply of good and efficient seamen.

‘In 1873 and 1874 the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships took evidence, and reported. Our Committee memorialised the Commission to extend its inquiry as to the quality and efficiency of our seamen, and offering evidence. Our request was granted, and Mr. Balfour, Mr. Nelson, and Captain Ballantyne gave very valuable evidence on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry. The final report of the Royal Commission supported the views of this Committee in several important respects; this report undoubtedly had much influence in shaping future legislation on these subjects.

1873-4.  
Royal  
Commis-  
sion on Un-  
seaworthy  
Ships.

‘Thereupon, this Committee issued their Supplementary Report in October, 1874. This report dealt fully with the connection which it was considered desirable should exist between the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine. This report was freely distributed and discussed, and ultimately, on January 14, 1875, a very large and representative deputation from all the leading seaports, organised by this Committee, pressed these views upon the consideration of the Admiralty. Mr. Ward Hunt, the First Lord, with whom was present Sir Charles Adderley, President of the Board of Trade, acknowledged the importance of the subject, expressed sympathy with it, and held out a hope that he might mature a scheme to submit to Parliament, but added that shipowners would have to bear a share in the cost of maintaining training-ships for the purpose. On March 10 following, in moving the Navy Estimates, Mr. Ward Hunt advocated some such scheme.

1874.  
Supple-  
mentary  
Report of  
Liverpool  
Committee.

‘In this year, 1875, Sir Charles Adderley introduced his Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill. It contained the abolition of advance notes, but the only part dealing with supplies of men was in Clause 33 :—

1875.  
Merchant  
Shipping  
Amend-  
ment Bill

#### MERCANTILE MARINE FUND (PART VII. OF MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1854).

It shall be lawful for the Board of Trade to make out of the Mercantile Marine Fund grants to managers of training-ships in respect of boys trained in those ships, who are in point of physical capacity, age, character, and acquirements qualified to serve in the merchant service and in the Royal Naval Reserve.



The grants shall be made upon such conditions as Her Majesty may from time to time by Order in Council determine.

‘Whereupon, this Committee resolved as follows :—

That the provisions, under Clause 33, ‘Grants to Training-ships,’ in the ‘Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill, 1875,’ are, in the opinion of this Committee, wrong in principle, totally inadequate to the object in view, and do not meet the recommendations of the Royal Commission in the matter of training seamen for the mercantile marine, on the following grounds :—

1. The proposed grants being dependent upon fitness to serve in the Royal Naval Reserve, it is not correct in principle that shipowners and seamen, through the Mercantile Marine Fund, should alone be taxed for this purpose, but that the Admiralty should bear its share of the cost.

2. The proposal being to base such grants to training-ships upon *results*, it is very questionable if managers will take the responsibility of incurring heavy expenditure in filling their ships on the uncertainty of grants; and this fact will probably operate against any increase in the number of training-ships.

3. The clause omits to name the class of training-ships to which grants would be made. This Committee most strongly objects to consider reformatory ships as a proper nursery for either the mercantile marine or Royal Naval Reserve.

4. Even should managers be disposed to incur the risk and expense of filling their training-ships in the hope of obtaining grants, the number of boys that would thus annually be turned into the mercantile marine, over and above what this source at present supplies, would be so limited (probably a few hundreds per annum, while about 9,000 fresh hands over the present recognised sources of supply are wanted), that this Committee cannot but consider the provisions made in the Bill utterly inadequate to the object.

5. The scheme proposed in no way meets the requirements of the mercantile marine, as indicated in the Report of the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships, and this Committee considers the recommendations of the Royal Commission should obtain from the Legislature fuller consideration and support.

6. As it is avowed and admitted that trained reserves are wanted for the Navy, a scheme of the nature proposed should, therefore, be dealt with by the Admiralty and Board of Trade conjointly, and not in a bill dealing with matters more purely belonging to Board of Trade legislation.

7. This Committee believes that the recommendations embodied in its Supplementary Report (October, 1874) form the best basis for a satisfactory solution of the question of supplies of good seamen from the mercantile marine and Royal Naval Reserve.

Therefore, it is resolved to petition Parliament to withdraw Clause 33 from the ‘Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill,’ and to refer the whole question to the Admiralty and Board of Trade, to be dealt with by

them conjointly, in a separate Bill, and the Honorary Secretary is hereby instructed to take the necessary steps toward this end, and also to endeavour to obtain general support to the views of this Committee.

‘These views were freely circulated, and other bodies and associations invited to join by petition, and otherwise, to have these opinions supported in Parliament, when the Bill came on for second reading. The Hon. Sec. had interviews with Lord Eslington, Mr. Brassey, and Mr. Norwood on the subject also, and afterwards the Committee agreed to support certain resolutions (as amended by this Committee) to be added to Clause 33 by Mr. Brassey and Mr. Norwood. The Bill was, however, withdrawn at end of the session.

‘In September of this year, 1875, Mr. Brassey addressed a meeting of shipowners, &c., at the Mercantile Marine Service Association Rooms, on the seamen question, amongst other matters; and in December, 1875, he addressed a large meeting of sailors, at the Sailors’ Home, Liverpool, respecting a seamen’s pension fund, on which occasion I had an opportunity of addressing them on other points dealt with by our Committee. Public discussion of these and other matters became very general, in view of the expected Merchant Shipping Bill, which it was known Sir Charles Adderley was to introduce next session, 1876. Sir Charles visited Liverpool in December, 1875, when an opportunity was afforded of laying the views of our Committee before him. In January, 1876, the views of the Liverpool shipowners were again taken on the question, and resolutions come to very much in accord with those of this Committee. Colonel Hill, of Cardiff, moved and carried certain resolutions respecting seamen at the Associated Chambers of Commerce, at London, in February, and the Liverpool Seamen’s Protective Society memorialised Parliament pretty much in the lines of this Committee.

‘Then came what is known as the great London Tavern Meeting of Shipowners, on February 2, 1876, to consider their position in view of proposed legislation. Lord Eslington, who presided, said, in his speech, “he had long himself held that legislation was necessary for training seamen,” &c., &c.; and at that meeting the following resolution was unanimously adopted :—

This meeting regrets that, notwithstanding all that has been done to secure better food and accommodation for seamen, and for their general welfare, a large proportion of the annual casualties is caused by their inefficiency, intemperance, and negligence, as appears from the evidence taken before the Royal Commission; and that great risks are incurred, and losses sustained, by the desertion of seamen at home and in foreign and colonial ports.

Proceed-  
ings in  
1875.

Proceed-  
ings in  
1876.

A large deputation submitted its views to the Prime Minister a few days after, when Mr. Disraeli "expressed regret that nothing had been said by any of the speakers respecting training-ships, a subject on which he had hoped to have received some expression of opinion, especially from representatives from the great Northern ports," &c. Lord Eslington, in reply, assured the Prime Minister that that was a matter of detail, and was to be dealt with by the Standing Committee, composed of representatives of all the ports, and sitting in London.

'I was a member of this Committee, and lost no time in urging forward the seamen question for consideration, in accordance with the resolution passed at the London Tavern, and especially in view of our promise to the Prime Minister in connection with the 24th Clause of the Merchant Shipping Bill then before Parliament, a clause giving power to make grants towards training-ships out of the Mercantile Marine Fund. And on March 24 the following resolution was adopted:—

That the members of the Central Committee be called together, at an early date, to consider the best means of improving the condition of seamen and for securing efficiency in the manning of ships by means of apprenticeship, training-ships, or otherwise.

'Several special meetings were called, but as often adjourned, the subject never having been fairly discussed. At last circulars were issued to the various affiliated bodies, asking their views categorically on matters dealing with seamen and training-ships, and on April 19 a meeting was held to consider the returns. A very small number attended, and, although the returns were almost unanimous in support of the views held by the Committee of Inquiry, the chairman ruled that only those present could vote, and this, although the views only of the various associations were invited. Mr. Donald Currie, besides, stated that the A.B. rating question was just got up by the seamen themselves and Mr. Plimsoll for trades-union purposes; this, although it was well known that the Committee of Inquiry, the Liverpool Shipowners' Association, and other bodies, had years before adopted this recommendation. Mr. Currie also urged it would be better to wait to see what members of Parliament said in the House first regarding training-ships, &c., and that a friend of his (not a member of the Committee) had views about training-ships that would be valuable. The subject was dropped, and thus, what ought to have been a splendid opportunity and what our Committee often desired, for obtaining a full and candid opinion by the shipowning bodies of the United Kingdom was



lost to us, in order to assist and direct legislation on these important questions. It is only right to state that, but for Mr. Balfour, at this time, the Committee, disheartened, were almost disposed to cease further efforts. I have dwelt on this period of our struggles to show the difficulties and disappointments against which we had often to contend.

'In February, 1876, Mr. Brassey delivered a lecture, followed by discussion, on "How to Improve and keep up the Seamen of the Country," at the United Service Institution, London, when an opportunity was afforded me of advocating the views of our Committee. On March 10, 1876, Mr. Brassey in Parliament moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient to establish a compulsory self-supporting Fund for Seamen." This was not adopted, neither did the Merchant Shipping Bill, when passed, contain reference to either advance notes or training-ships.

'From this time forth the question of pension funds and training ships were practically dropped by this Committee.

'In October, 1876, Mr. Balfour and I, by invitation, and as representing the Committee of Inquiry, read papers on the seamen question at the Social Science Congress, held at Liverpool, Mr. J. Shaw-Lefevre being President of the section, and, notwithstanding his expression of opinion that he differed from the views expressed by us, the large meeting almost unanimously adopted the resolution submitted by Mr. Bushell, viz :—

That it be a recommendation of this Section to the Council of the Association, that steps be taken to memorialise Government to take into consideration the question of the condition of our seamen and their deterioration in its national and professional aspects.

'This recommendation was acted upon, and the Council of the Social Science Congress presented a series of resolutions in accordance therewith to the Board of Trade, in March, 1877.

'In January, 1878, Sir Charles Adderley and Mr. Stanhope introduced a "Merchant Seamen Bill," which was referred to a select committee of the House. I was invited to give evidence on behalf of the Shipowners' Association, and, in the course of examination, I supported the views of this Committee in the matters of advance notes, rating, &c. The Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, was brought in on May 31; the only part of it that dealt with matters urged by this Committee being the abolition of the advance note. The Bill did not become law.

'In this year, 1878, a new organisation came into existence, the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom. This I, with others,

1878.  
Merchant  
Seamen  
Bill.

Formation  
of Chamber  
of Ship-  
ping.

hailed with great satisfaction, as we felt that on all matters affecting the shipping interest there could now be obtained a distinct and clear expression of views on all matters, no real consensus of opinion being obtainable previously. The first meeting was held in February, 1878, under the presidency of Mr. H. J. Atkinson, Chairman of the London General Shipowners' Society, when a resolution was adopted appointing a sub-committee, of which I was a member, "to consider in what manner the evils complained of in respect of the inefficiency of seamen may best be remedied." This sub-committee had frequent sittings and its recommendations came up before the Chamber at its next annual meeting in February, 1879, when I had the honour of being elected President for the year; these were put each in order to the Chamber and fully discussed, and most of them adopted, among which were abolition of the advance note, rating for A.B., Consular convention, &c. This distinct expression of opinion by the shipowners of the United Kingdom was submitted to Lord Sandon, President of the Board of Trade, by a deputation from the Chamber in March, 1879, and I have no doubt the Bill which his lordship prepared to submit to the House was, to a certain extent, based upon those recommendations, or at least they could not fail to strengthen his lordship's own views on the subject in framing his Bill. It will be in the recollection of all how obstruction in Parliament delayed the passing of many important measures, Lord Sandon's Bill among the rest. Having so frequently experienced it, I may be permitted to mention the rare courtesy shown to our deputations by Lord Sandon during his period of office, and the earnest attention given to all matters submitted to his lordship's consideration. After the next annual meeting of the Chamber of Shipping in February, 1880, a further deputation urged on Lord Sandon the desirability of re-introducing his promised Bill in harmony with the views of the Chamber of Shipping, and I have reason to know the Bill was printed, and ready to be presented, but the early dissolution of Parliament deprived Lord Sandon of the honour and credit of passing a Bill, which will prove, I feel sure, a real good to the seamen of our mercantile marine. His successor, Mr. Chamberlain, received also a deputation from the Chamber of Shipping, and he has had the good fortune to have passed his "Payment of Wages and Rating" Bill, which embodies in it various clauses of Lord Sandon's measure, such as abolition of advance notes, A.B. rating, licensing of seamen's lodging-houses, and clauses respecting payment of wages in the interest of seamen. I confess, after knowing the trouble Lord Sandon took about this question, his earnest anxiety to

do what was right and good for all interested, I am sorry he has not had the honour of passing these measures, an honour which is justly his due.

'The only important matter that has not been attained is the Consular convention with the United States, but this matter is being dealt with by the Board of Trade, and the Chamber of Shipping has it constantly in view to urge when necessary. So that it is not necessary to prolong the Committee of Inquiry for this object alone, especially as this matter is now in such good hands. And in the matter of licensing seamen's lodging-houses, the Committee has drawn the attention of the Liverpool Town Council, through the Mayor, to the powers conferred upon it by the Act of 1880, and we hope Mr. A. B. Forwood and other members of this Committee, who are on the Town Council, will assist in carrying this important measure into effect.

'In its earlier years, the action of the Committee of Inquiry in stirring up an interest in our seamen very soon began to bear fruit; attention became more directed to the matters of housing and feeding the men; in both respects our forecables and dietary are in marked contrast to what existed but a short time before. The men themselves, under these and other beneficial influences, have been steadily improving in physique, sobriety, and character; and now that the objects sought for by this Committee have become law, I anticipate in a few years a still greater and more decided improvement, accompanied by results beneficial to our seamen, and of advantage to shipowners, underwriters, and all connected with the mercantile marine of this great country.

Gradual  
improvement in  
seamen.

'In thus recording the work of the Committee, and what it has been instrumental in accomplishing, it is my duty to mention some of those associations and individuals who have given a loyal and helping hand; it is not necessary to name members of the Committee itself, some of whom were in a representative capacity and rendered valuable aid. Foremost, I would name the Liverpool Shipowners' Association, under the chairmanship of Mr. Macintyre, Mr. Shallcross, and Mr. Macdonald; the Mercantile Marine Service Association, under the presidency of Captain Ward—an association that never failed to support us most cordially, and giving the use of their rooms for public meetings in connection with the objects of the Committee. The Seamen's Protective Society rendered good service, likewise the General Shipowners' Society of London, and in connection therewith I would specially name the able and eminent services of Mr. George Duncan and Mr. G. L. Munroe. The various



outports were most courteous, and we had real help from the Shipowners' Associations of Glasgow, Dundee, Belfast, East Coast ports, and in a very special degree from Cardiff, through Colonel Hill, the Chairman of the Shipowners' Association there. I do not wish it to be inferred that on every question all agreed with us, but there was a hearty co-operation to assist us to arrive at correct conclusions, and to support us in the attainment of our main objects. Lord Eslington (now Earl Ravensworth), Sir Frederick Gray, Mr. Thomas Brassey, Mr. W. Rathbone, the late Mr. Graves, and Mr. Laird all assisted us in every possible way, and I would fail in my duty if I did not now recognise the uniform courtesy received from all Government officials with whom we came frequently in contact, especially Mr. Farrar and Mr. Gray, of the Board of Trade.

'In conclusion, let me add that, notwithstanding the great amount of work involved, extensive correspondence, printing, reports, deputations, &c., &c., I know of no body that has done so much work, and accomplished so much at so little cost—I believe something under 100*l.* will cover all our expenses from the beginning.

'Gentlemen, what I have stated I believe to be a correct, though necessarily brief, summary of the work effected by the Committee of Inquiry into the Condition of our Merchant Seamen.

'Perhaps you would allow me to add another word. In the Bill which has just been passed is a clause abolishing arrest without warrant. I must say that I myself, as representing the Shipowners' Association of Liverpool, was very much opposed to such abolition—at all events, until the seamen were improved. This measure might safely have been passed some years hence, but should not have preceded the abolition of the advance note. The result has shown that the various shipowning bodies were quite right in their views. There is already a large increase in neglecting to join and desertion since the Bill was passed; but I hope that as soon as the advance note system is abolished, and other remedial measures take effect, there will be an improvement in this respect.

'The CHAIRMAN: My Lord and Gentlemen, now that you have heard the statement that has been read to us by Mr. Williamson, it is my duty to move the following resolution:—

That the principal objects aimed at by the Committee of Inquiry into the Condition of our Merchant Seamen having been mainly attained, the time has arrived when the Committee may be, and is hereby, dissolved.

You have heard from this Report that in the Payment of Wages and Rating Bill, which was passed last session—a Bill which had

been prepared by Lord Sandon, but which he never had an opportunity of introducing to the House, and which, I believe, was ultimately passed to the very letter as he had prepared it, and I think it right that that should be stated—are embodied many of the objects which were sought to be obtained by the Committee of Inquiry, such as the abolition of advance notes, A.B. rating, licensing of seamen's lodging-houses, and improved methods in the payment of wages in the interests of seamen. Now, let me say, lest I should omit to mention it, that the clause which gives power to local authorities to license and inspect seamen's lodging-houses is a permissive power, and we know, by past experience, that permissive powers are very often neglected and not used. But I hope there will be a strong expression of opinion that our City Council will not neglect to exercise that permissive power which this Bill has conferred; for I know of no action likely to be productive of better results in the interests of our seamen than that those houses should be licensed, and, being licensed, should be inspected. I am extremely glad to find that such experience as the Committee have gained enables them to confirm the statement which Mr. Williamson has made, as to the marked improvement which has taken place in the condition of our seamen. We know that there is, beyond any legislation which it is possible for Houses of Parliament to make, another legislation which is, in many ways, very much within our individual power; and one is glad to find that the power which the shipowner always has had has led to the fulfilment of a duty which I think he has of late years much more than formerly realised,—the duty of making the men who are in his employ as comfortable and as happy as it is possible to make them under the circumstances of a sea life. There has been a very great improvement of late years in the fore-castle of the ship, and in the dietary of the sailor. I can look back, for some thirty-five years, on duties which brought me intimately in connection with our seamen. I was very long associated, and am still, though less actively, with the Mersey Mission to Seamen. My duties, during my office as president of that society, led me to make very careful inquiry as to the religious, moral, and physical condition of our seamen. Well, anybody who can look back, as I am able to do, to those days must know how sad was the condition of our seamen in almost every respect; and those who now see how that condition has changed, must congratulate the whole body connected with our shipowning and mercantile marine, that such great improvements have taken place. I am addressing a large body of shipowners and shipmasters, and I cannot forbear expressing the hope

that that good spirit which has begun, and which has produced such good results, may be continued, and that the shipowners, in appointing shipmasters and officers, will not only consider—which, of course, is their first duty—the safety of the ship, and the lives and the property carried by the ship, but will also not fail to remember that upon the character and influence of the master and officers of that ship depends the well-being of our seamen. A long voyage brings to a right-minded captain of a ship a very favourable opportunity for good, and confers upon him great power; for, like Alexander Selkirk on the island of Juan Fernandez—

He is monarch of all he surveys,  
His right there is none to dispute.

That power and influence involve him in very deep responsibility; and in many ways which are suggested a right-minded man can contribute not only to the health, happiness, and comfort, but also to the religious and moral well-being of the seamen who are under his charge.

‘MR. BALFOUR: Mr. Chairman, my Lord, and Gentlemen, you have heard from our Secretary that the Liverpool Committee to inquire into the condition of our merchant seamen has now run its course, and is about to be dissolved. It was formed in the year 1870, and was called into existence because of the preparation of a Bill by the Board of Trade, called the Merchant Shipping Code of 1870, a Bill which contained, as you have heard, about 800 clauses. In going over that Bill it was found, to our dismay, that, although the measure purported to deal with a great variety of matters, yet this great subject of the improvement of our seamen was entirely ignored. There was no reference to the subject whatever. Mr. Chairman, the condition of our seamen at that time, and the condition of our seamen now, is one that demands not only the attention of shipowners, but of the general community, and of our Government. Lord Sandon will bear me out, and there are a number of representatives of our leading insurance companies here who also will bear me out in saying that the main cause of the loss of property and of life at sea is not the overloading of ships, as Mr. Plimsoll has so earnestly pointed out,—is not the deficiency of hulls or defective rigging,—but mainly arises from defective seamanship. The Mercantile Marine Service Association has done a great deal towards the improvement of the sea knowledge of captains and of officers. We cannot, as a shipowning community, be too thankful for the steps which were taken to establish the “Conway” training-ship, and for having a system of



examination for our merchant captains and officers previous to their being appointed to ships. But the further subject—the efficiency of seamen to discharge their duties—has been one that, till the preparation of this Bill, now happily an Act of the Legislature, had not been dealt with. The compulsory apprenticeship system was done away with in 1854, and the Government of that day most unhappily and unfortunately failed to substitute any system for the training of seamen in its stead. Many of us would not have objected to the abolition of compulsory apprenticeship, provided that some means—some adequate means, some wise means—had been taken for maintaining an efficient supply of able-bodied seamen for our English navies. The Committee of Inquiry have the great satisfaction of having done something in the direction of encouraging the training of more and better seamen for our English merchant navy. Lord Sandon has prepared a Bill, and I am sure he responded to the entreaties of Liverpool in doing so, and that Bill requires that every seaman, before he gets the rating of A.B., shall have served four years at sea. That is not securing that we shall have more apprentices, but it is pointing towards that end, and we hope that it will be a great stimulus to the development of our apprenticeship system. The new Act provides for the abolition of advance notes, and we have also got provision made for that most important matter, the licensing of seamen's lodging-houses.

‘The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shallcross, Chairman of the Local Marine Board, will support the resolution.

‘Mr. SHALLCROSS: I am not one of those who agree in all that has been said about the deterioration of the British seaman. In 1870, or thereabouts, a great addition to the mercantile marine was required, in consequence of the state of trade, and a large number of men did join the mercantile marine who were not seamen at all; but I think it was scandalising the British seaman at that time to say that he had deteriorated. I believe there were as good seamen then as ever there were, and that there are as good seamen now as ever there were. This brings me to the question, whether it is desirable, in the interests of the boarding-houses, that they should be licensed. I am quite sure that the respectable body of boarding-house keepers, who receive these missionaries would be greatly benefited themselves, and would very much welcome the carrying out of this Act. There is a clause which gives power to the sanitary authority to bring into operation this regulation; and I really think that it will do as much for the social condition of the seaman as anything that we can well imagine. We know that the

crimping system has been very largely stopped by the river police ; indeed, it was mainly through the indomitable perseverance of our Chairman, Mr. Bushell, that that force was created, at a time when I believe he was a member of the Dock Board. Well, that has been as much for the benefit of the sailor, I think, as anything that I know of. Well, gentlemen, this licence would be, in my opinion, of very little use if there was no inspection combined with it. There is also another point I should like to draw your attention to, and that is, that no seamen's lodging-house should be associated with either beerhouses or licensed victuallers' places of business. I think it is not fair, if those licences are to be granted, to connect them with dram-shops, where the men would be tempted to waste their money.'

The meeting was subsequently addressed by Lord Sandon, who, in the course of his speech, said :

' I always feel that when you are in office, it is wise, and you are bound to consult a considerable number of people of weight and knowledge outside your office, as well as the able men inside, before you legislate ; and I concluded, in the middle of last year, that some such Bill as you have now seen passed should be passed. But it was obviously impossible to pass any measure then, owing to the obstruction we were suffering under ; and, of course, at the beginning of a Session, like that in last February, with a dissolution in prospect, I should have been infatuated to have brought forward such a Bill. What I did, therefore, was this :—On the first night of this Session I produced a Bill, which I had prepared with great care, called "The Conditions of Service Merchant Seamen Bill," which treated the following points:—It provided for the abolition of the advance note, for the prompt payment of the seaman's wages when he returned at the end of his engagement—a very important matter ; it provided for the rating of A.B. being only given after four years' sea service—also a very important matter ; and it provided for certain amendments to prevent crimps boarding vessels on return home. It provided, also, a power to the court to rescind when desirable contracts made between masters, seamen, and apprentices, and it dealt with two other important matters. I determined, after much consideration, that nothing should induce me to abolish summary arrest without warrant. I believed that to be of the greatest importance not only to the shipowner, and to those whom his ship carries, and to those whose goods he has charge of—but equally, and, perhaps, to a greater extent, to the good seaman, whose first interest it is that he should not at the last moment have a worthless substitute shipped on board

because the good seamen are drunk and cannot be got on board. I have always felt the question of summary arrest was of the greatest value to the good seaman, really perhaps more than to the shipowner, so I would not touch that, and I have felt strongly that though in time you might hope to be able to do away with this special treatment of the sailor—at which no one would rejoice more than myself—it was necessary to alter his habits first, and raise his character in other ways, as has been the case in the Royal Navy. But I provided in this Bill to substitute fines, in all cases, for imprisonment, and that men should only be imprisoned on non-payment of fines, which would put the seamen very much in the same position as the workmen on shore. It also provided that the local authority should have the power to license and inspect seamen's lodging-houses: a matter to which I attached great importance, and which could easily receive hereafter further legislative assistance, if experience showed it needed, when once the principle was adopted in an Act. That Bill I introduced as soon as the new Parliament met—in fact, in the same half-hour that the Government introduced the Bill they called "The Payment of Seamen's Wages Bill." I kept my Bill running alongside the Government Bill until it came up for second reading, and then I was glad to see that legislation was safe, and I dropped my measure, but I took good care that the two subjects I cared for should not be dropped. I, therefore, brought in an amendment to put in the power of inspection of seamen's lodging-houses by the local authorities, and also the substitution of fines for imprisonment. You will now see how that measure has been built up, founded on inquiries and reports of many Commissions and Committees, both yours and of Parliament, and how it has gone through Parliament. I rejoice to think that the many conferences I had had with shipping men upon almost every word of the Bill, had removed objections and enabled it to pass with hardly any opposition. The only additions have been, first, the clause about lodging-houses, which was embodied in my motion on the Government measure; then there was added to it a clause about allotment notes—which the Social Science Association proposed; and lastly one with regard to the arrest without warrant, putting seamen in the same position and on the same footing as people are under the Employers and Workmen's Act. I approve of the Government Bill, with the exception of that clause; but I suspend my judgment upon that clause, and if it works well no one will rejoice more than I shall do at its success. Allusion has been made to the transmission of wages scheme, and I would like to confirm what has been said by Mr. Shallcross. It is working very



well. It was first started by my predecessor, Sir Charles Adderley, for the port of London. Its object is, that a seaman, as soon as he lands, should be able to go straight home to his own port, and receive his wages there, instead of hanging about the port of landing, getting into all sorts of trouble. That was drawn up by some of the excellent heads of the Board of Trade, and I must bear my testimony to the unwearying labours of Mr. Gray, Mr. Swanston, and others in arranging and carrying out this scheme—able men, whose whole heart and soul are devoted to the welfare of the mercantile marine. It was originally drawn up in the Marine Department, and Sir C. Adderley put under it “the port of London.” A period of only about two years has elapsed, and 2,313 men last year transmitted their wages to their own ports in this way. They had gone to their ports and have drawn their money, amounting to 32,000*l.*, and we have heard from all quarters, as well as from London, of the very improved character of the sailor. Last year I was so much pleased with the reports I received of it, that I sent round to Liverpool, Dundee, Cardiff, Leith, Bristol, and other places, to try and start similar operations there. In Cardiff, Dundee, Leith, Plymouth, and Liverpool, I am glad to say, it is working well and with good prospects of success when it is more known, and in Bristol preparations are made to start the scheme. And before I left the Board of Trade I was glad to find that the shipowners at all these ports had entered warmly into the proposals of my officers. It only remains for me to say how heartily glad I am to join with you in honouring this excellent Committee, whose great exertions have been so fruitful, and whose good work has now come to an honoured end—in the best way—by being accomplished.

‘The CHAIRMAN: It is now my privilege and pleasure to thank you most heartily, on behalf of the Committee, for the kind vote which you have passed. Before sitting down I wish to place before you the desire of the Committee to put on record their high appreciation of the services which have been rendered by Mr. John Williamson, to whose labour and practical experience they have throughout the proceedings been deeply indebted.’

The speech delivered by Mr. Ismay at the annual meeting of the Governors of the Liverpool Sailors’ Home, on February 15, 1881, contains the recent impressions of a thoroughly competent authority as to the condition of our merchant seamen. It will be perused with deep interest by all who feel solicitude for the improvement of the mercantile marine.

‘I think we must all admit that the report which has just been

presented shows that the work carried on by the Sailors' Homes is as necessary as ever. There is no work more needful and which has a greater claim to support in Liverpool than this. All classes in this great community share in the results of the sailor's labour, while sailors make fewer demands upon our assistance than any other class. There are some features in the report which at first do not appear of an encouraging character. There is the fact that a less number of sailors have used the Home than in last year, and then there is the serious diminution in the amount received for board. But these drawbacks appear to have arisen from causes which are outside of the control of your committee, and, after all, they are not unfavourable to the end desired—viz., the moral well-being of the sailor. A portion of the falling off is due, I understand, to the desire of men who have secured regular employment to settle down and have houses of their own. That desire is a natural and praiseworthy one, and is more likely to make itself felt among sailors now than formerly. During the last few years the conditions of the sailor's employment have changed greatly. In that time there has been an enormous increase in the building of steamers over sailing ships, and it follows, as a matter of course, that the sailor makes his trip much more rapidly than he used to do. The old days—when he saw his home only at long intervals—are rapidly passing away, and now men employed on the regular liners return every five or six weeks. A sailor, therefore, feels his need of a home more, and it is a good sign that he is prepared to exert himself to maintain one; for a real home of his own, with all its influences for good, will do more for a sailor, and also other men, than anything else. Again, the rapidity with which crews are paid off, and the facilities given to the men to proceed to their relatives in other parts of the country, although unfavourable to the income of the Home, can hardly be considered unfavourable to the sailor himself. Look at the surroundings of this Sailors' Home of ours. They appear to me to be a reproach to our much-vaunted civilisation—46 public-houses within a radius of 150 yards, and as within that radius you have the extensive area occupied by the Custom House, Post Office, and Messrs. Davenport's large warehouse, you may judge for yourselves how thick these spirit-shops are upon the ground. Every sensible man must feel that they tend to nullify the good the Home seeks to do. I do not blame the men who conduct these houses so much as I blame the magistrates who wrongfully granted so many licences in this locality. It was a most injudicious step. It has proved most detrimental to the interest of the sailor, and I do not think it can have proved very advantageous

to the interest of the publicans, for it has fostered undue competition and compelled them to sell, in order to live, under circumstances when I am sure they would rather have declined. It is cheering to learn, however, that in spite of the temptations to drink by which sailors are surrounded, sobriety is permanently increasing amongst them. There is no fact laid before us in the report in which all connected with shipping have a deeper interest than this one, and it is a fact which is borne out by the observation of those whose business takes them to the docks when vessels are leaving for sea. There is less drunkenness, and consequently less fighting and fewer disturbances, than there was some years ago. A further proof of the improvement alluded to in the report is that ships will now frequently make the round voyage without a single case of desertion; and when we remember how universal desertion once was, and how seriously it injures the mercantile service, we can but feel grateful to the agencies which have tended to check it. Allusion is made in the report to the difficulty experienced in obtaining employment for coloured men who have been brought to this country by British and foreign vessels from the United States, and discharged on arrival. As a general rule these men are not sailors at all; and there can be no doubt considerable injustice is practised towards them. They complain, and complain justly, that frequently they are landed here without a penny, their wages having been paid in the United States to persons who have seldom real, but frequently imaginary, claims against them. The remedy seems to me to lie in the formation of a Consular convention between this country and the United States, giving power to the Consuls to order the wages to be paid to the seaman or his representative on the termination of the voyage. Such a convention would do something to check an evil from which the British sailor, as well as these unfortunate coloured men, suffers. It often happens that a British sailor arrives in New York from India or China with a large balance of wages due him, and immediately he is the object of designing persons, who induce him to demand his discharge and his wages. As a result the man spends or loses all, is shipped off for England with the wages for the voyage home drawn in advance, and arrives to find himself penniless. In such a case the intervention of the Consul, with power to order the balance of wages to be paid into the Board of Trade at home to the man's credit, instead of to himself personally in New York, would be of inestimable value to the seaman and his family. Since the last annual report Parliament has passed several measures favourably affecting the welfare of sailors, notably the abolition of advance notes and the A.B.



rating bill. I wish that something could be done in regard to the apprenticeship system. I don't think we are doing our duty to our successors in neglecting the carrying and training of apprentices in ships. I may mention that we have three apprentices, trained up in our employ, now in command of White Star steamers, and I name this because I think it would be better for the mercantile marine if the importance of the apprenticeship system were more fully recognised as a means of supplying trained and efficient officers. If we look at the number of vessels building—and I am glad to find that the demand extends to sailing ships as well as to steamers—we must conclude that trade has greatly improved. Ships are not built unless with a view to profit, and as Liverpool must share largely in the benefits of this prosperity, let her prove that she has a heart that beats in sympathy with those through whose labour that prosperity is obtained, and whose life is one of peril at sea and on shore. I trust that there will be practical evidence of this sympathy in the response made to the appeal of the Committee for funds.'

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ANNUAL WASTE OF SEAMEN IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE.

Calcula-  
tions of  
Liverpool  
Committee.

BEFORE any calculation can be made as to the number of seamen required to fill up the vacancies annually occurring in the ranks of the seamen of the merchant service, it will be necessary to take a general survey of the mercantile marine, both as to the tonnage of the ships, and the strength of the crews employed. Ample information for this purpose was brought together by the Liverpool Committee in the following tables:—

*Number and Tonnage, with Crews, of Vessels belonging to the United Kingdom for 1873.*

Class of Trade	Sail			Average Tonnage	Steam			Average Tonnage	Totals		
	Vessels	Tons	Crew		Vessels	Tons	Crew		Vessels	Tons	Crew
Home . . .	11,546	749,345	39,590	65	1,096	215,263	13,243	196	12,642	964,608	52,835
Part Home } & Foreign }	1,341	204,667	7,521	153	221	97,445	3,817	441	562	302,112	11,338
Foreign . .	5,898	3,113,132	83,766	528	1,479	1,363,245	54,302	925	7,377	4,481,377	138,008
	18,785	4,067,144	130,877	—	2,796	1,680,953	71,362	—	21,581	5,748,097	*202,230

\* This includes 19,840 Foreigners—of whom 15,263 are in Foreign Sail, and 3,782 in Foreign Steam Trades.

Crews in sail . . . . .	130,877
Deduct stewards, &c., 10 % . . . . .	13,087
	117,790
Crews in steam . . . . .	71,362
Deduct engineers, stokers, stewards, &c., 50 % . . . . .	35,681
	35,681
Seamen . . . . .	153,471
Deduct Foreigners . . . . .	19,840
	133,631

Foreigners, according to the estimate of the Committee, constitute about 13 per cent. of the seamen employed; but as they are mostly able seamen, they constitute not less than 20 per cent. of the

total number holding that rating. Indeed, Mr. Williamson, the secretary to the Liverpool Committee, affirms that of the British seamen only 20,000 are A.B.'s. If this calculation were correct, our merchant service would contain British and foreign able seamen in about equal proportions. This statement, however, is based on an arbitrary assumption, which it is not possible to verify by accurate data.

According to the figures given in the official 'Tables showing the Progress of British Merchant Shipping,' this estimate of the Liverpool Committee for the year 1873 was, however, somewhat too high. In these Tables the percentage of foreigners in 1873 is stated to have been 10·87 only. There appears to have been a slight falling off in the number of foreign seamen about the year 1870, probably caused by the Franco-German war, as Germany supplies a large contingent of those employed. But on the whole the percentage is steadily increasing, as will be seen by the following figures:—

Year	Percentage of Foreigners	Year	Percentage of Foreigners
1852 .	3·7	1872 .	11·24
1857 .	8·9	1877 .	13·01
1862 .	10·2	1882 .	15·31
1867 .	12·5		

These Tables contain also an analysis of the crews of 35 sailing, and 25 steam, ships for the years 1870 and 1880. The vessels were selected as representatives of their class, and, as the same vessels are referred to for both years, the figures may be regarded as fairly illustrative of the increase that is taking place in the practice of employing foreign seamen. The following are the totals:—

	Total Crew	Total Foreigners	Percentage of Foreigners
35 sailing ships 1870 . .	767 .	117 .	15·2
35 " " 1880 . .	718 .	159 .	22·1
25 steam " 1870 . .	1083 .	56 .	5·1
25 " " 1880 . .	939 .	61 .	6·4

It is chiefly in the sailing ships, bound on distant voyages, that foreigners will be found in the largest numbers. Even in the sailing ships the foreign element is limited to the seamen before the mast. Foreign shipmasters and mates are a mere fraction of the total number. Largest number in foreign trade.

When, moreover, shipowners raise objection to the introduction of foreigners, it must be remembered that the scale of wages is probably less than it would have been if foreigners had been prohibited from sailing under the British flag. Foreign seamen keep down wages.

An inference, unfavourable to the quality of our British seamen,



Seamen deterred from joining Reserve from various causes.

has been drawn from the limited number that have volunteered to serve in the Naval Reserve; but this circumstance scarcely affords sufficient foundation for the belief that the number of British able seamen does not exceed 20,000. Captain Furnell, the late shipping master at Poplar, was of opinion that only a small proportion of seamen join the Reserve, because of the difficulty experienced in making up the necessary time for the drills between the date of a ship's arrival and her departure on a fresh voyage. The *wives* of seamen also raise objections to their husbands joining the Reserve, under erroneous impressions as to the duties involved, and the liability of the men to be called upon to serve in the Navy.

Captain Furnell believed that the supply of seamen was at present quite equal to the demand. Ships were never detained for want of crews, though '*first-class* men could not always be obtained.'

Annual loss of seamen.

Passing from the subject of the foreign element in our merchant service, we have now to consider the more important subject of the annual waste of British seamen, and the means by which the mercantile marine is to be supplied with men. Opinions differ widely on this subject. A writer in the *Nautical Magazine* has calculated the waste of seamen at about 10,000 annually, and that in order to fill up that number of vacancies, 35,000 boys must always be kept in training.

According to the computations of the Liverpool Committee, the total waste of seamen in our mercantile marine from all causes, death, drowning, desertion and giving up a sea life, is estimated at about 16,000. The Secretary of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade has, in various public utterances, adopted the same estimate, and has stated that of the total waste of 16,000 men, nearly one-half the number disappear from British ships, registered in the United Kingdom, and trading over the sea.

On a general review of the numerous statistics given in the preceding pages, it will be evident that if, as it is very probable, the merchant service loses 16,000 seamen a year, and if the number of foreigners did not increase, the deficiency would have to be made good by shipping ordinary seamen, and boys not indentured as apprentices. It may be that these youths do not receive a systematic instruction in seamanship, but they probably enjoy as many opportunities of learning their business as the sham apprentices who were taken when apprenticeship was compulsory. A certain proportion, at least, possess a natural aptitude for the sea, and furnish highly qualified A.B.'s to the merchant service.

It is impossible to calculate with precision the number of seamen that may be required by our shipping trade in the future. While the exports and imports are rapidly increasing, and British tonnage retains an ample share of the shipping business of the world, the transition from sail to steam is in rapid progress, the aggregate tonnage of the ships does not increase in proportion to the extent of the commerce transacted, and the number of men required in proportion to a given tonnage is steadily diminishing.

Future demand for seamen uncertain.

In 1792, the merchant service employed 118,000, and in 1814, 173,000 men, while in 1861 the number was as nearly as possible the same as in 1814. If, however, we compare the tonnage for the respective periods, it will be found that it had increased from 2,681,000 tons in 1814, to 5,895,000 tons in 1861. Thus, while the tonnage was doubled, there was no increase in the number of seamen. In 1882 the Mercantile Navy of the United Kingdom had risen to 6,908,000 tons, but the number of men employed was only 196,000. The economy of labour, which has been obtained by improved mechanical appliances, supplies an additional argument against the interference of the Government in the work of training seamen, except in connection with the Naval Reserve.

## CHAPTER IV.

## APPRENTICES.

Reduction  
in number  
when com-  
pulsory  
apprentice-  
ship  
abolished.

At the period when apprenticeship was compulsory, the total number of seamen in the foreign and the home trade of the country was about 175,000, and the number of apprentices is believed to have been not less than 35,000. Immediately after the abolition of compulsory apprenticeship, the number of apprentices was reduced from 34,855 in 1848, to 17,411 in 1851. It may be assumed, from this rapid diminution in their numbers, that the obligation to carry apprentices was not quite so beneficial to the merchant navy as it has been supposed. The instantaneous reduction in the numbers would indicate that the obligation was viewed as an ungrateful burden, rather than as a means of promoting the efficiency of the mercantile marine.

Ship-  
owners ob-  
jected to  
compulsory  
apprentice-  
ship.  
Newcastle.

In the course of the inquiries conducted by the Manning Committee of 1852, it was clearly proved that such was the view taken by the shipowners. The Local Marine Board of Newcastle represented that the legal obligation to carry apprentices, which until lately had been in force, was not of any benefit to the country, was highly objectionable to the shipowner, and ought never to be re-enacted. The Hull Local Marine Board stated that the vessels in the Baltic and American trades were generally laid up for the winter months, and that the legal obligation to carry several apprentices in such vessels had been a very severe tax.

Mr.  
Richard  
Green.

Mr. Richard Green, one of the most public-spirited members of the ship-owning community, said that the apprentices were considered very objectionable by shipowners generally.

The views of the Bristol Local Marine Board were summed up in an exhaustive paper, prepared by the chairman for the information of the Manning Committee. He said:—'It having been stated that the absence of any legal obligation to carry apprentices in merchant vessels may tend to diminish the number and deteriorate in youth the quality and moral character of our seamen, I beg most



respectfully to state, that the shipowners of this port decidedly differ from those by whom that opinion is held. In the first place, I believe that in respect to British seamen, as in every other department of labour unfettered with impolitic regulations and restrictions, demand and supply, both in quantity and quality, will keep pace, without the use of adventitious aid. In the next place, my experience, as well as that of other shipowners, and more particularly nautical men in the merchant service, whom I have consulted on the subject of your letter, has convinced me that the system of compulsory apprenticeship to the sea service has, instead of improving, greatly tended to the deterioration of "the quality and moral character of the seamen themselves." Such apprentices were generally boys of no education or moral training, and it was one of the great sources of annoyance to masters and owners, under the compulsory system, that such apprentices never served out their time. At best, they usually remained as apprentices only until they had learnt sufficient to get the wages of an ordinary seaman, and then deserted. But in the majority of cases they ran away during or at the end of the second or third voyage, sometimes, indeed, the first, and either abroad or elsewhere, where there were no means of retaking them. Again, those who remained by the ship were, whenever she was laid up, either at home or abroad (which not unfrequently happened for two or three months at a time, particularly in the East and West Indian and North American trades), lounging about in idleness, and most frequently contracting vicious habits, whilst at the same time the expense of their support fell heavily upon the shipowner. In this way a great number of demoralised and unqualified men were introduced as seamen into our merchant service; and I will venture to say that the present race of British seamen, taken as a body, though improved somewhat in education, are no better in morals, and far inferior in discipline and seamanship, to the race of twenty years ago.'

Compulsory apprenticeship was introduced in 1844, with the special object of manning the Navy, and was abolished in 1849. It only existed five years, and was abandoned not only because it was considered a burden on the shipowner, but also, because it was unsuccessful for the particular object in contemplation, the training of boys for a sea life.

The system  
unsuccess-  
ful.

Of late, the plan of making apprenticeship compulsory has been much discussed. It has been chiefly suggested by those who are not satisfied with the men obtainable at the present rate of wages. The suggestion, however, has provoked from other quarters the

Its revival  
would be  
opposed.

strongest opposition. Mr. Lamport, indeed, declared that the operation of compulsory apprenticeship was a gigantic sham.

America.

The same proposals have been revived in America. It has been proposed that every vessel, trading under the flag of the United States, should carry one apprentice, and that there should be a heavy penalty for a breach of this regulation.

Ordinary  
seamen  
now em-  
ployed in  
lieu of ap-  
prentices.

In our own merchant service, according to the present organised practice, ordinary seamen are taken in lieu of indentured apprentices. Being engaged only when their ship is about to sail, and discharged on the day of her arrival, they rarely take part in the work of refitting, and they are consequently deficient in expertness as riggers. In the course, however, of long voyages men acquire skill and experience from the numerous disasters and repairs which must be effected at sea. The trades unionism among the professional riggers, who refuse to work on a ship where any seamen, not being members of their society, are employed, adds to the difficulty of training ordinary seamen in the art of refitting ships.

Appren-  
tices desert.

It has been shown that formerly, when the law of compulsory apprenticeship was in force, apprentices constantly deserted their ships. Then, as now, an apprentice of the same age as, and perhaps more skilful than the ordinary seaman working by his side, was not unnaturally dissatisfied that his shipmate, with inferior qualifications, should earn 2*l.* a month while his own earnings did not exceed 15*s.* Many boys, after serving three years at sea, are almost equal to able seamen; and if they see other men earning 3*l.* a month, while they are receiving perhaps 10*s.* or 12*s.*, they are necessarily discontented and tempted to desert.

'Indefati-  
gable:' ex-  
perience of  
Committee.

The case was put in the clearest and plainest way by the Managing Committee of the 'Indefatigable,' in their reply to the inquiries recently addressed to them by the Board of Trade:—

'It will be observed that the number of boys sent to sea as indentured apprentices has been small in comparison with the number sent in other capacities.

'While most of the boys not apprenticed have done well, complaints have several times been received of boys breaking their indentures.

'As long as the question of taking apprentices or not remains an open one, the Committee are of opinion that this will be a great difficulty with the managers of training ships.'

'Take, for example, the case of two boys trained on board the "Indefatigable," both at the time of leaving the vessel being equally well qualified. The one is bound to a shipowner for four years, for

which period of service he receives 35*l.*, the other enters the service of a shipowner who declines to take apprentices, and receives 25*s.* or 30*s.* a month for his first voyage. He arrives at home, and is free; on his second voyage he ships as an ordinary, and perhaps gets 2*l.* or 2*l.* 10*s.* a month.

‘He meets the apprentice in a foreign port, who is still receiving perhaps 6*l.* or 10*l.* a year. The apprentice, being no doubt equal to his companion in attainments, thinks his case a very hard one, and runs away from his ship in order that he may obtain similar wages. This has happened several times in the experience of the Committee, and it is a state of things for which under existing circumstances it is difficult to find a remedy.’

These arguments show the impracticability and the inexpediency of any attempt to re-enact a law of compulsory apprenticeship.

The majority of those shipowners, who are anxious for the co-operation of the State in the training of seamen, incline rather to an increase in the number of training-ships, than to the system of compulsory apprenticeship. In the succeeding chapters, therefore, the organisation of the training-ships will be minutely examined.



## CHAPTER V.

## EXISTING TRAINING-SHIPS.

Training-ships recommended by Manning Commission.

THE proposal to establish additional training-ships, on which those shipowners who are most dissatisfied with the seamen of the present day mainly insist, is based on the recommendations of the Commission on Manning, over which Lord Cardwell presided with very great ability. The plan in question included extensive proposals for the establishment of training-ships for seamen, under the auspices of the Government. Before entering on a discussion of the details by which such a plan could be carried out, it will be convenient to show what amount of progress has already been made in the work in contemplation.

Parliamentary Return relating to training-ships, 1875.

A Parliamentary paper was issued in the session of 1875, giving all the more important particulars relating to existing training-ships, and containing tabular statements, showing the number of boys who have entered the Royal Navy, the merchant service, and other occupations on shore, with other details relating to indentures of apprenticeship, working expenses, the number of boys who, in the preceding twelve months, had gone to sea as apprentices, or in other capacities, and giving reports as to the conduct of the boys.

The following is an analysis of the Tables given in the return:—

PARTICULARS GIVEN FOR THE YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31, 1874.

TABLE I.—*Number of Boys sent into the Merchant Service by each Class of Ship, and Average Cost of each Boy.*

Class of Ship	No. of each	No. of Boys sent into the Merchant Service			Average Expense of each Boy on Board, per Head, per Annum
		As Apprentices	In other Capacities	Total Number	
For Officers . . . .	2	105*	7	112	£ s. d. 58 15 0
Industrial Schools . . . .	8	109	291	400	18 19 7½
Independent Ships . . . .	4	147	479	626	21 6 2
Reformatories . . . .	3	Nil†	168	168	20 7 8
Grand Total, No. of Boys sent into the Merchant Service . . . .				1,306	

\* These are not seamen apprentices, but officers.

† All boys being under detention, are sent to sea on licence, under the Reformatory Act.

TABLE II.—*Expenses of Maintenance.*

Class of Ship	No. of each	Receipts			Total Receipts	Total Expenditure
		Public Vote	Private Subscriptions	Pupils' Fees		
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
For Officers . . . . .	2	—	127 0 0	13,492 10 0	13,619 10 0	13,755 0 0
Industrial Schools . . . . .	8	38,246 16 11	4,400 19 1 <sup>c</sup>	—	42,647 16 0	33,017 5 9 <sup>†</sup>
Independent Ships . . . . .	4	—	10,942 15 3 <sup>‡</sup>	—	10,942 15 3	24,181 15 11
Reformatories . . . . .	3	12,861 0 0	393 0 0	—	13,254 0 0	13,731 0 0

<sup>c</sup> This is the amount received by 7 ships.

<sup>†</sup> This is the amount spent by 7 ships.

<sup>‡</sup> This is the amount received by 3 ships.

TABLE III.—*Accommodation.*

Class of Ship	No. of each	No. of Boys Ship is intended to hold	No. of Boys actually on Board	Increased Number of Boys the Ship might accommodate
For Officers . . . . .	2	280	243	37
Industrial Schools . . . . .	8	2,125	1,876	249
Independent Ships . . . . .	4	1,150	998	152
Reformatories . . . . .	3	700	637	63
Total extra Number the Ships might accommodate . . . . .				501

Four of the training-ships referred to in the return are stationed in the Thames, and three in the Mersey; while there are only two in Scotland, and one in Ireland. Stations of training-ships.

The 'Worcester,' in the Thames, and the 'Conway,' in the Mersey, which have been established for the professional education of boys, who are being brought up to become officers in the merchant service, are not training-ships in the ordinary acceptation of the term. About 250 students are now being trained on board these ships. 'Worcester' and 'Conway.'

Passing from the two officers' school-ships to the vessels established for training boys for service afloat before the mast, it should be remarked that the 'Warspite' stands on a different footing from any other ship included in the return. It is maintained by the Marine Society, and the entire expense is defrayed by voluntary subscription. The 'Warspite' is not an industrial school, nor is it a reformatory. It has therefore received no aid from the Government. 'Warspite.'

Passing from the 'Warspite,' the ships, classified as industrial schools, come next under review. These ships are seven in number, and are capable of accommodating 2,000, although they only have on board about 1,700. They are— Industrial school-ships.

The 'Formidable,' at Bristol.	The 'Southampton,' at Hull.
„ 'Havannah,' „ Cardiff.	„ 'Gibraltar,' „ Belfast.
„ 'Mars,' „ Dundee.	„ 'Wellesley,' „ Tyne.
„ 'Cumberland,' „ Glasgow.	

The 'Indefatigable' and the 'Chichester' are not certified industrial schools, and receive no State aid whatever.

Though there are several ships on the Thames, there is not one 'certified' under the Industrial Schools Act—none, therefore, to which any London magistrate can send a boy under the provisions of the Act. The consequence is that the London School Board has been greatly impeded in its work by the fact that boys could not be sent to training-ships, unless at Bristol, or Cardiff, or in the Tyne, this arrangement involving considerable additional expense and much inconvenience.

Rules of  
'Formid-  
able.'

The system of training, and the class of boys admitted into the industrial school-ships, can be best understood from a perusal of the rules and regulations for the 'Formidable,' at Bristol. The managers state that the objects of the institution are the reception and training of boys, who through poverty, parental neglect, or being orphans, are left destitute and homeless, and in danger of being contaminated by association with vice and crime. Such boys are to be admitted, fed, and clothed, both under the powers of the Industrial Schools Act 1866, and otherwise as the Executive Committee may determine.

More than 500 boys have been discharged from the 'Formidable' since the establishment of the institution, nine-tenths of that number adopting a seafaring life, though this is not compulsory. Communications are kept up with these boys for some time after leaving the institution, reports being received from the owners and commanders of the ships they join as to their conduct, and a comparatively small percentage indeed of these reports are unfavourable.

'Cumber-  
land.'

The 'Cumberland' was established in the Clyde, not so much with a view to make good the deficiency in the supply of well-trained seamen for the merchant service, as to obtain the means whereby a number of lads, in a state of destitution, and exposed to grievous temptation to crime, might be provided with an honest employment.

Reforma-  
tory ships.

It has been stated already that three of the training-ships receiving aid from the State—viz., the 'Akbar' and 'Clarence,' at Liverpool, and the 'Cornwall,' in the Thames, belong to the reformatory class. These ships can accommodate 700 boys, and there are now on board 636 boys. The expense of maintenance, as in the case of



the industrial school-ships, is provided for chiefly out of the contributions received from the State.

The ships take only such boys as are under sentence of a magistrate. They are strictly reformatory.

The remaining ships are for homeless and destitute boys. From a charitable point of view, it is, no doubt, most desirable that these lads should be reclaimed, but (excepting, perhaps, the element of 'seafaring men's children in the 'Indefatigable') there is, among all these charities, no educational provision for the sons of merchant seamen who have done well in their service, and have therefore a fair claim on the community for help in respect of such of their children as desire to follow their fathers' profession.

Referring to the tabular statement, it will be observed that fifteen ships for the training of seamen have been established within the last eighteen years, the 'Akbar,' the first of them, having been established in the Mersey in 1856, under the auspices of the Liverpool Juvenile Reformatory Association. The whole of these ships, since the establishment of the Marine Society in 1756 to September 1, 1874, have sent into the Royal Navy 29,781, and into the merchant service 30,311; and, deducting the number contributed by the Marine Society's 'Warspite,' it appears that the fourteen remaining ships have sent to sea in all 6,031, of which number 401 entered the Royal Navy and 5,630 the merchant service in a period of eighteen years, showing how little, by comparison with the mercantile marine, the Royal service has availed itself of these ships as a source for procuring boys.

The boys in these school-ships have, on an average, somewhat under two years' training, but more than a quarter of the lads sent out do not go to sea. On a closer examination of the returns, the results would appear less satisfactory. The 'Warspite' and 'Chichester,' which trained 552, or exactly half the boys sent to sea from these ships in 1874, only keep them on an average between *seven and eight months*. Considering the material they have to work on, so short a space of time must be quite inadequate to turn out a decent seaman. And the material of all these schools is unsatisfactory.

The result  
not in all  
respects  
satis-  
factory.

The boys on board the training-ships of the Royal Navy have immense advantages in the essential point of physical development. It would, indeed, be unfair to expect that a philanthropic institution should recruit from the same sources, or offer the same advantages as the Royal Navy. The training-ships maintained by the grants of Government and by philanthropic contributions, draw their recruits

from a pauper class; and it is an inevitable consequence that boys, who have passed their infancy under the most favourable conditions, should be inferior in size and strength to the lads more carefully recruited, more abundantly fed, more perfectly trained, in the Navy. These observations apply, though not perhaps in an equal degree, to the boys on board the 'Warspite,' who are untainted with crime.

The author once had an opportunity of comparing a number of boys who were being mustered on their arrival from London, on board the training-ship at Portland, with the youthful crew of the 'Warspite,' which he had recently seen. The former presented—as, indeed, it might have been expected—a more powerful physique, and greater promise of becoming able-bodied seamen. The inferiority is the inevitable result of the entirely different nature of the two institutions.

## CHAPTER VI.

## RECRUITING FOR TRAINING-SHIPS.

DESIRABLE as it is to make an effort to reclaim the unfortunate children of the pauper or criminal classes, it must be admitted that, in introducing boys of this class in large numbers into the merchant service, we incur a serious risk. The calling of the seaman must inevitably be lowered in the estimation of the honest and independent working population, if we allow it to become a general and recognised refuge for the destitute.

The sea  
should not  
be the  
refuge for  
the desti-  
tute.

At a time when it is being asserted—and with too much truth—on all sides, that a demoralised tone pervades the forecastle, we may rest assured that, if we wish to introduce a truly effectual reform, we must begin by attracting boys to the sea from pure and untainted sources.

This consideration becomes the more important now that we appear to be entering upon a new phase of the question, and when it seems likely that the Government may grant subsidies, on a more extensive scale than heretofore, in support of school-ships for seamen.

Able officers of the Navy have asserted that the merchant training-ships are, with the exception of the 'Warspite,' conducted upon wrong principles, and that they can never be feeders of the Navy. It is a grave error to suppose that the dregs of society can be educated for a sea life. A sailor, to be worth anything, must be physically strong and healthy.

Boys are taken into these establishments poverty-stricken, and in a half-starved condition, and, even on board the school-ships, they are not fed on a scale sufficiently liberal to make up for the want of proper food before their admission. Under such unfavourable conditions, they cannot grow up to be able-bodied seamen, according to the standard accepted in the Royal Navy.

Boys  
should be  
of good  
physique.

It is the object of the author of the present publication, not so much to urge any opinions of his own, as to make known the thoughts



of many minds on these subjects, and so to assist the public in arriving at a sound and wise conclusion, with a view to practical legislation. With this object, a number of extracts shall now be given from the evidence taken in Parliament, and at the Admiralty, on the subject of recruitment for the sea.

Mr.  
Lindsay  
and  
Admiral  
Martin.

Mr. Lindsay, a member of the Manning Commission, in his separate report, observed 'that he quite agreed with Admiral Martin, that "to take boys from reformatories and prisons would be to incur the expense of training a class of men the least likely to be amenable to discipline, and the most likely to abandon their country when most needed." They should be unequivocally rejected. Boys taken from these sources would only contaminate the honest boys on board, and do irreparable and extensive mischief. A change of scene from land to sea will not eradicate the original vicious habits of a bad boy, who is better excluded altogether.'

Mr.  
Lampport.

The same opinion was expressed by Mr. Lampport, the eminent shipowner, of Liverpool, whose ability and authority have been so highly appreciated, and whose accidental and untimely death, at a time when his experience and sagacity in nautical affairs would be of especial value, is a national misfortune. Mr. Lampport told the Commission on Merchant Shipping in 1860 that he 'had his doubts,' individually, as to whether a sea life furnished an appropriate career for the class of boys admitted into reformatory schools. 'There is,' he said, 'so much leisure in a sea life, that I am almost afraid that in many instances it will be found that the boys are not kept sufficiently hard at work to prevent their minds from falling back upon evil thoughts.'

Captain  
Brown,  
R.N.

The following remarks occur in a paper, containing suggestions for the improvement of merchant seamen, prepared for the information of the Manning Commission by Captain Brown, R.N., who, for so many years, held the office of Registrar-General of Seamen:—

'The great object to be attained in dealing with a matter of such great national importance is, however, the improvement of the physical, moral, and mental condition of our merchant seamen; and, to effect this, the source from which the stock is derived should be *pure and respectable*, instead of the reverse, as is now the case; for many boys of vicious character, irreclaimable on shore, are, as a last resource, consigned to the sea service.

'Considering that not more than 200,000 persons of all conditions are actually employed in British registered ships, and that little more than a moiety of these are seamen, there can be no reason why all the boys reared up to maintain this—an insignificant fraction of

our population—should not be derived from a *good* source instead of the outcasts of society.'

The Manning Commission took evidence from some of our best naval officers as to the selection of boys for training for the Royal Navy.

There was a general concurrence of opinion among the witnesses examined, to the effect that 'it would be prejudicial' (to use the language of Commodore Eden) 'to the public service to take boys from the streets, reformatories, and unions.'

Commo-  
dore Eden.

Captain Hon. S. T. Carnegie, C.B., said that to take such boys would cause infinite disgust to those already in the service.

Sir William Mends said: 'I think if it were done in a wholesale way it would be injurious. I believe there are a few examples in which they have turned out well, but I think if they were increased to any extent it would be injurious. Great difficulties attend such a question; they do not know what to do with the boys, and it seems hard after a boy has been so long going through such a course not to have some honest career open to him. I think it would be a dangerous thing to throw open either the naval or the merchant service.'

Sir  
William  
Mends,  
K.C.B.

In reply to a question by Admiral Martin, he added that he would not recommend that such boys should be taken into a yacht, or into a gentleman's service.

Sir Frederick Grey, writing on the same subject, at a much more recent date, remarked that it would be disadvantageous to the boys themselves, and hurtful to the public service, to admit into ships of war juvenile offenders who have passed through the reformatories, since among the large number of men collected together in our ships, it must happen that some evil-disposed persons would be found ready to lead back these boys to the evil courses from which they had temporarily been rescued.

'That the object of the benevolent persons who have established these refuges is most praiseworthy everyone must admit; but he believed it would be a fatal mistake, at a time when our efforts to raise the character and condition of the seamen of the Navy had already borne good fruit, to introduce among them lads upon whom they would naturally look down, and whose early habits would have so little fitted them for life in a ship of war. Great changes in the system on which these training-ships are in general conducted would be necessary before they would be adapted for the object he had in view.'

Captain Wilson, who some time since completed his period of

Captain  
Wilson,  
R.N.

service as the officer in charge of the entire training establishment of the Navy, is perhaps the most competent authority on the subject under discussion. In the paper on the Manning of the Navy, which he read before the Royal United Service Institution in 1876, he stated that 'he was not prejudiced against private training-ships, but that the boys were no more trained, as compared with the boys in the Navy, than a mere militiaman was to a guardsman. They were not even physically fit for the work on board a man-of-war. The whole of the merchant training-ships put together, excluding the "Warspite," did not supply the Navy with fifty boys per annum. You hear,' he added, 'of Lords of the Admiralty going down and making long speeches about these vessels being feeders for the Navy, but the fact is they are nothing of the sort. The boys are so much inferior in physique that we actually won't take them in the Navy; and as to the training, it is anything but complete.'

Shipowners  
favourable  
to training-  
ships.

In order, however, that a fair and just opinion may be formed as to the capability of these ships for the training of seamen, it is right that attention should be called to the fact that, on the whole, ship-owners appear to be more inclined than formerly to receive these boys into their ships.

General  
summary  
of evidence  
favourable.

Viewed as a whole, it may with good reason be asserted on behalf of the training-ships, that they are effective in rendering a really important service. They save from indolence and from crime many children of the most neglected, and therefore the most dangerous, classes; and they give to these little boys some acquaintance with an honourable and useful calling, by following which they may be enabled to earn an honest livelihood. And if we may admit, on the one hand, the force of Mr. Lamport's objection to a sea life for boys, among whom many must be found more or less tainted with vice, there is, on the other hand, this exceptional advantage in the vocation of the sailor, that it entirely severs the young seaman from the vicious associations of his early life.

An experiment, the first of the kind, has been tried in the reformatory ship established at New York. The vessel sailed from that port in November 1872, visited St. Thomas, Madeira, and other ports, and returned in April 1873.

'It is almost impossible,' says a writer in the *New York Times*, 'to enumerate all the benefits that accrued to the boys. When the ship left New York it had on board many lads who would have grown up to be the outcasts of society. In place of these the vessel brings home a crew that will make good seamen, who have made a winter passage across the Atlantic, and have aided in navigating the



ship a distance of nearly fifteen thousand miles. Out upon the ocean these boys enjoy as much liberty as anyone on board, and soon lose all recollection of their commitment.'

The opinion therefore, so ably advocated by Mr. Burns in his recent letter, would appear to be sound and true, when he says that the existing training-ships, whether industrial, reformatory, or benevolent, should not be interfered with, as they are all doing good service to the State, and performing a work which could not be as efficiently carried on under an organisation established by the Government, and unsupported by the personal superintendence and heartfelt sympathy with their work displayed by the numerous philanthropic committees, who have taken up the matter as a voluntary and private undertaking.

While, however, it is not desirable to interfere with the special work of the industrial ships, it is, for the reasons already stated, impossible to accept the industrial or reformatory systems as a means of making good the alleged deficiency in the supply of competent and well-disciplined seamen for the merchant service. If we except the 'Chichester' and the 'Warspite,' the present training-ships have only sent to sea half the boys they have educated, and several of them are merely branches of farm schools and local shore charities; while the 552, sent to sea by the 'Chichester' and 'Warspite' in 1874, passed through those ships in seven or eight months. It was to be expected that the industrial school-ship system would be found, from lack of recruits, incapable of sufficiently large development to supply in any considerable proportion the seamen required to man the great mercantile marine of England. It has also been shown that the merchant service should, in the main, be recruited from an altogether superior class of boys. The boys required, both for the Navy and the merchant service, ought to be, as it was pointed out by the Manning Commission, of respectable parentage, strong, and healthy.

The Government may render essential service in furnishing to those who seek it, and especially to seamen, the opportunity of bringing up their sons to the sea. Nothing has as yet been done by the Government to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission in favour of public training-ships in the great commercial ports. While considerable assistance has been rendered by the State to ships established for the reformation of young criminals, or for the relief of destitute boys, no ships have been established under the auspices of the Government for the children of respectable and honest parents. 'Let a man be ever so much in want of help, if he

Industrial and reformatory ships cannot be the principal feeders to the merchant service.

The aid of the State bestowed almost exclusively on reformatory and industrial ships.

keeps his boys out of the streets he shuts them out from any participation in the contributions given by the State.' This is an unsatisfactory feature in our present system.

Desertion from British merchant ships in foreign ports would be much diminished by introducing well-connected boys into the service. After the system of education at Greenwich was improved, under the regulations laid down in 1845, a Greenwich boy was never known to run away from a merchant ship. Lads coming from respectable parents have something to lose. Those who have been drawn from the workhouse, or from parents in the lowest degree of indigence, have no tie to bind them to their country.

## CHAPTER VII.

## AGE OF ADMISSION OF BOYS INTO TRAINING-SHIPS.

It has already been pointed out, that the training in the private school-ships, however valuable in a philanthropic point of view, is imperfect. The parentage of the boys is unsatisfactory. In some cases, they do not remain sufficiently long on board to acquire even the rudiments of seamanship, and as few of the vessels have a sailing tender, the boys have no practice in manœuvring a ship under way.

There is a further objection, on which it is proposed, in the present chapter, to insist. Boys are received on board the training-ships at too early an age.

Boys  
entered too  
early.

It has been observed, in reference to the 'Goliath,' that no boy ought to be received on board until he is at least thirteen years of age, and that many boys on board that vessel were mere children.

In the case of the 'Mars,' the training-ship at Dundee, the average age of admission is from twelve to fourteen, and the boys leave at sixteen years of age. In the report of a recent school inspection on board the 'Formidable,' it is remarked that a large proportion of the boys then in training were too young.

The same remark was made by Mr. Gray, on the occasion of an official visit to Bristol, when he said that the majority of the boys on board the 'Formidable,' were not of sufficient size or stamina to become sailors, competent to render efficient service either in the mercantile marine or the Royal Navy.

Mr. Lindsay, in his Report on the Manning of the Navy, expressed an opinion that no boy should be received into a training-ship before he was fifteen years of age. 'An abundant supply,' he said, 'of lads of excellent character and of honest parentage would be offered at that age. From our Coastguard alone, when raised to 12,000, Commodore Eden said that nearly the requisite number could be obtained.'

Manning  
Commis-  
sion, 1859.

'By entering honest boys of good parentage at 15 years of age for the training-ship, and at 16 for the Navy, there will be a con-



siderable saving to the State, as Admiral Martin has pointed out, and physically considered, the boys at 16 will be much more equal to the performance of their duties. The constitution is impaired if a boy is prematurely sent to work on board ship. In my own experience I have witnessed very lamentable cases of this. I seldom take any boys into my service under the age of 16, and the supply is very much in excess of the demand. It is sometimes a matter of deep regret to me that I cannot employ one-tenth of the fine, hale, honest lads who apply.'

Admiralty  
Committee,  
1852.

The Admiralty Committee appointed to revise the rules and regulations for manning the Navy, in 1852, collected much valuable evidence on this subject. The opinions of some of the naval officers consulted are set forth in the following extracts from the Blue-book.

Admiral Sir J. A. Ommanney said:—'I am of opinion that the age of 14 for the entry of boys for Her Majesty's service is preferable to 13, as they are too slight for any service, scarcely for that of an officer's servant. I think that if it could be deferred until the age of 15 it would be more desirable, for the expense of the victualling and pay of boys of the age of 13 is the same as at the age of 15.'

Rear-Admiral Dixon stated that the Admiralty Regulations fixed the age of admission between 13 and 16 years. 'The former age he thought too young. He would not enter them before they were 14.'

Captain Sir T. Maitland considered that the proper age for entering boys for the Navy was from 14 to 16 for boys who had not been at sea, and from 16 to 18 or 19 for those who had been at sea; but he thought that boys should not be taken after 16 unless they had been at sea.

Rear-Admiral Sir J. Stirling was also of opinion that the proper age of entry for second-class boys was from 14 to 16 years.

The Committee of Naval Officers summed up the conclusion at which they had arrived, after lengthened inquiry, by stating that they advised that boys of the second-class should not be entered under the age of 14, as their physical and mental powers would then be more developed than at an earlier period, and would afford a better guarantee for their future growth.

The opinions, derived from naval sources, and expressed before the Manning Commission of 1859, were generally in favour of regulations for excluding boys from training-ships until they had reached an age when the physical powers were beginning to be well developed.

Captain Harris, having been for some years in command of the 'St. Vincent,' training-ship, at Portsmouth, was perhaps the most

experienced witness on this subject. His views are contained in the following extract from the report of his evidence, published in the Blue-book:—

‘(*Admiral Shepherd.*) In your opinion what is the most desirable age at which boys should be entered, and under what age not?—Not under 14.

‘Would not 15 be better still?—I think 15 would be better; but you would require more ships to train them if you wanted to enter a large number, in order to give them the necessary training to make them available for seamen.

‘Is it not your opinion that a boy entered even at 16, having proper care bestowed upon him, would be made as good a sailor as a boy entering at 14?—I am quite of that opinion.

‘Many of your novices, or the greater part of your novices, entered at 18 and 19 and even up to 22 and 23, have turned out good seamen?—Many novices who began their career in the “Illustrious,” are now A.B.’s and leading seamen; some are petty officers.

‘Who entered as late as the age of 22?—Yes, some of them did enter as late as 22. I might add to this that I think after 20, except in time of war, it is not desirable to enter them.

‘But supposing the country to require an almost instantaneous supply of seamen, and it could not get seamen, would you not recommend that we should enter lads from 18 to 20?—I would enter them up to 23 under such circumstances.’

‘(*Admiral Martin.*) You think that to obtain the most perfect seamen they should be taken early in life?—Yes.

‘That is from the age of 14 to 17?—Yes.

‘A man is never so perfectly at home aloft if taken older, as he is if he begins as a boy?—Activity aloft depends very much upon a practised eye, and I think the elder men do not acquire that activity so readily as those who are taken younger.

‘It would be very unusual for men taken at 22 or 23 to turn into very smart topmen?—I do not think they would, generally speaking, prove so smart aloft as those entered younger. I should prefer not to take them later than 20.

‘Seventeen is about the prime for making a seaman?—Yes.’

In a letter setting forth the views of the Liverpool Committee of Inquiry, Mr. Williamson, their honorary secretary, has recommended that boys should be entered at 15 or 16 years of age. Such lads, he says, would not require more than twelve months’ training, and the cost, therefore, would be reduced to a minimum. It is stated further,

Liverpool  
Committee.  
Mr.  
William-  
son.

in the report of the same Committee, that boys ought not to enter training-ships under the age of 14 years, and that, in order to be available for the fore-castle of steamers and sailing-ships as ordinary seamen, they ought to remain on board until they were fully grown and fit for the sea-service. Two years of such training would be ample; but they should not leave the school-ship under the age of 17 or 18, and then, after two years at sea, they would be able to rate as able seamen.

The regulations approved by the Admiralty for the admission of boys into the Navy are as follows:—

‘3. Every boy previous to being entered must satisfy the examining officers—

‘I. That he is of robust frame, intelligent, of perfectly sound and healthy constitution, free from any physical defects or malformation, and not subject to fits.

‘II. That he is able to read and write. The lowest test by which a boy should be entered is to be able to read a passage of two ordinary lines of one syllable, and sign his name legibly.

‘III. That he is between the ages of 15 and 16½ years.

‘IV. That his height and measure are sufficient, the rules being as follows:—

	Height (without shoes)	Measurement round the chest.
Boys between 15 and 15½ . .	5 ft.	30 in.
” ” 15½ ” 16 . .	5 ft. 1 in.	30½ in.
” ” 16 ” 16½ . .	5 ft. 3½ in.	32¼ in.

‘Boys, however, who do not quite reach the standard of height and measurement may, if in all other respects desirable, be entered, with the special permission of their Lordships.

‘V. Every boy must bring with him a certificate of birth, or a declaration made by his parents or guardians before a magistrate to show that he is of the proper age; and also the consent in writing of his parents or guardians, or nearest relatives if he be an orphan, to his entering the Navy and engaging to serve until he shall have completed 10 years’ continuous service from the age of 18.

‘4. Boys are not to be received from reformatories or prisons.

‘6. If the examining officers are of opinion that the boy is in every respect fit for the service, the engagement to serve continuously in Her Majesty’s Navy until he has completed 10 years’ service from the age of 18 is to be read and explained to him, and if he voluntarily agrees to its terms, he is then, in the presence of a



witness, to sign his engagement, and to be entered on the books of the ship.

‘By command of their Lordships,

‘ROBERT HALL.

‘To the Commanders-in-Chief, Flag-Officers, &c.’

The Admiralty in their Circular, offering contributions for boys joining the Reserve or the Navy, require that boys shall be 16 years of age, and have been for two entire years in a training-ship. The customs of the naval service have been established by the ripe experience of succeeding generations and the combined wisdom of many illustrious sea officers. The rules, therefore, of the training-ships maintained for the mutual advantage of the Navy and the mercantile marine, should be assimilated, as closely as possible, to those sanctioned by the Admiralty.

Admiralty  
regula-  
tions.

In ships established, not as reformatories or philanthropic institutions, but solely with the view to training seamen, the age of admission should be fixed at 14, where it is intended to keep the boys two years under training, and at 15 where the training is to be limited to a period of twelve months.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TRAINING SYSTEM: WHO IS TO PAY FOR IT?

UP to this point we have been able to show that an almost unbroken unanimity of opinion exists in favour of the establishment of additional school-ships for training boys in seamanship. The same unanimity is no longer to be found, and it perhaps would have been idle to expect it when we come to consider the best means of providing the funds required for carrying out the plan.

Proposed  
taxation of  
shipping.

Mr. Gray.

It has been proposed to levy a tax on shipping, for the purpose of maintaining training-ships, with exemptions in favour of vessels which carry apprentices. The general outlines of this proposal, both in regard to the levying of tax, and the application of the money, have been shadowed forth by Mr. Gray, of the Board of Trade, as follows:—‘If there was a tax of 6*d.* per registered ton on every foreign-going ship, there would be ample money to train 8,000 boys, at a cost of 20*l.* per head per annum. Inasmuch as the tax on shipping would not be applied for starting independent training institutions, but would be applied in assisting those training institutions that are already established by voluntary effort, it was not contemplated that the tax of 6*d.* per registered ton should bear the whole cost of training boys for the merchant service. It had been suggested that the best way of supplementing institutions like the “Indefatigable,” “Warspite,” “Chichester,” and others, was for the Educational Department to make a payment to the ship as to a school; for the Admiralty to make a payment out of the naval vote to the ship, as a gunnery instructing ship; and for the Board of Trade, out of the 6*d.* levied on British foreign-going ships, to make a payment to the ship for the training of boys for the mercantile marine. That suggestion had not received official sanction; but, without pledging anyone to the exact details of the scheme, or the exact proportion of the payment, it seemed to him that the very best way to proceed in the way of training boys for sea service was to supplement the voluntary institutions by payments from the departments

interested in the matter, viz., the Education Department, the Admiralty, and the Board of Trade.' In reply to a question, Mr. Gray said, 'It was estimated that the 6*d*. per ton levied on the steam and sailing vessels trading over the seas and registered in the United Kingdom, would produce 140,000*l*. per annum. There were no funds at the disposal of the Board of Trade which could be applied to the training of lads.'

This scheme for a tonnage contribution towards the maintenance of training-ships has received the cordial approval of several of our leading shipowners and of the Liverpool Committee. In their final Report they say, 'It is but reasonable to expect that a portion of the cost of training lads should be borne by the mercantile marine. It lies, therefore, with shipowners to say whether they are willing to assess themselves for so great a good; and it is a very hopeful feature that at a meeting held at Liverpool in September 1874, some of the most influential steamship owners expressed their readiness to support the recommendation of the Royal Commission in this matter. It is but fair and just that while steamship owners attract the best seamen to their service, and do nothing themselves in the way of rearing or training seamen, they should contribute towards such training-ships; and it is therefore to be hoped that the majority of steamship owners will follow the patriotic example shown them by the gentlemen referred to; for, as a trade, they will of necessity be the largest contributors in such a scheme.'

Both in his place in the House of Commons, and in his evidence before the Royal Commission, Mr. Norwood has expressed his approval of the principle of a tonnage contribution. The majority, however, of the steamship owners are opposed to the exemption of sailing ships from the payment of the tax; because, as they allege, all vessels alike would partake in the benefit to be derived. Moreover, the majority of the steamship owners are satisfied with their crews.

The Liverpool Committee did more than express in general terms their anxious desire for training-ships, and their own willingness to contribute towards the expense of maintaining them; for they prepared a complete scheme of self-taxation. The details have been given elsewhere; but I venture to reprint the draft of a sub-section, founded on their suggestions, which I was prepared to move as an addition to the appropriate clause of the Shipping Bill, introduced in 1875. The sub-section ran as follows:—

'For the purpose of providing the sums required for making grants for the maintenance of training-ships, an annual tonnage con-



tribution, not exceeding 6*d.* per ton, shall be levied on all shipping registered in the United Kingdom. There shall be exempted from the payment of such contribution—

‘(1) All ships carrying indentured apprentices, or young seamen under the age of twenty years, in the proportion of four to every 1,000 tons register, or any other number, which the Board of Trade may from time to time approve.

‘(2) All vessels under 100 tons register.

‘All training-ships receiving grants from the Board of Trade, shall be inspected annually, and in cases, where the discipline and training are not found to be satisfactory, the grants shall be discontinued.

‘The Board of Trade may, if they think fit, give premiums to the owners of sailing ships approved for such purposes for carrying boys. Such payments shall be made out of the annual tonnage contribution in the same manner as the grants to training-ships.

‘The Board of Trade may, from time to time, make regulations for defining the persons who are to be reckoned as young seamen for the purposes of exemptions under this section, and such regulations shall be conclusive for the purposes of this section.

‘The tonnage contributions to be levied, under the provisions of this section, shall be paid at such periods and places as the Board of Trade, from time to time, direct, and any officers of Customs may detain a ship until all contributions payable in respect of such ship have been paid.’

Shipowners  
unwilling  
to be rated  
for train-  
ing ships.

Such a proposal would have excited much opposition from the representatives of the shipping interest in the House of Commons. Even at Liverpool, the port where it originated, there had been constant fluctuations of opinion among the shipowners. In their successive Reports their Committee have exhibited considerable vacillation. In their first Report they recommended a tonnage contribution. In the Appendix to the same Report the suggestion was withdrawn; the Committee observing that ‘the methods proposed, respecting the taxing of shipowners for a proportion of the maintenance of the training-ships, are beset with difficulties, and from the steamship owners would, it is feared, receive so much opposition, that the Committee feel the matter must be reduced to the simple issue, viz., that any such training must be from the national point of view alone, and provided for entirely out of the national exchequer.’

The reason why the steamship owners objected to the scheme is obvious. There were 16,000 indentured apprentices in the mer-

cantile marine, giving an annual supply of 3,500 seamen a year, and as those apprentices was almost entirely in sailing ships in the foreign trade, and as four apprentices to every 1,000 tons is a fair proportion, the foreign sailing tonnage was nearly full of apprentices. Exemption would be claimed, therefore, for every foreign-going sailing ship, and there would be no means of ascertaining that boys designated as apprentices were properly instructed in their duty.

When the Liverpool Committee invited the concurrence of ship-owners at other ports to their various proposals for the amelioration of the seamen, they received their cordial approval to everything which did not involve an expenditure of money; but there was an equally decided opposition to the disagreeable process of self-taxation. The annual Report of the Sunderland Shipowners' Association contains a full explanation of the grounds for the objection taken to the patriotic proposals emanating from Liverpool:—

Sunder-  
land ship-  
owners.

‘That training-ships afford one means of providing a supply of apprentices for the sea service is admitted, and as it is proposed that “the boys, on entering the training-ships, are to bind themselves to serve in the Royal Naval Reserves,” it is obvious that such ships are worthy of the support of the Government and of the British public. But ought shipowners to be taxed for their maintenance? The Liverpool proposition is, that every ship, which does not carry a prescribed number of indentured apprentices, should pay an annual tax of 6*d.* per ton. And, if a tax be admissible under any circumstances, it must be confessed that a fairer method of levying it cannot easily be devised. But your Committee, after giving to this matter their mature consideration, while agreeing with the Liverpool Committee in many of their recommendations, entirely differ from them upon the point of attempting to force upon shipowners the obligations to take apprentices by saddling defaulters with a tax. Independent of all special considerations, your Committee urge it as a general principle that the commercial marine of this country ought to be left to itself, to fight its own battles and make its own way in the world. It does not appreciate the fostering care of Government Boards. In cases which affect the lives of seamen, their training and protection, and the conduct of officers, your Committee are free to acknowledge that the interposition of the Board of Trade cannot reasonably be objected to. But where the question is simply one affecting the supply of the marine labour, which, like any other labour market, is governed by the relations of supply and demand, your Committee see no more cause for legislative interference with shipowners than with any other class of the trading community.

The natural mode of attracting to the sea service a sufficient number of apprentices is to give them wages equivalent to what they would earn in other trades, combining with this a fair prospect of professional advancement.

‘Your Committee are of opinion that adequate wages, security for good treatment, and a certificate of merit after the expiration of the indenture, would afford quite as effective a method of promoting the increase of apprentices, and consequently of efficient seamen, as the Liverpool scheme of training-ships. At the same time, it is not intended to exclude the training-ship scheme, except in so far as it imposes a specific tax. The imposition of a tax would be found in its operation extremely irritating, not because of the amount of money levied, but through the vexatious delays and interferences, with which it would be necessarily associated. But further, the main object of the training-ship system is to provide for the increase of the Royal Naval Reserve, and the advantage accruing from it to the merchant service is partially counterbalanced by some disadvantages. It might be highly inconvenient for the ship’s apprentices to be called away from the ship’s duty to be trained for the Royal Naval Reserve; and it is clear that for all apprentices to be compelled to obey such a call, would be an intolerable nuisance. There must, therefore, be apprentices of another class, and it is enough for your Committee’s argument, that inasmuch as apprentices of another class are an imperative necessity, the Liverpool scheme ought not to be adopted alone.’

Mr. Lindsay’s letter to Mr. Gourley, M.P.

Mr. Lindsay took the same ground in his opposition to the Liverpool scheme. He explained his views in a letter to Mr. Gourley, dated April 6, 1874, and published in the *Nautical Magazine*, in which he says:—

‘The supply of seamen for the mercantile marine is not one which requires any legislative interference. It must regulate itself, and while there is a demand for men in all other branches of commerce, to whom greatly enhanced wages are paid, we can only secure the requisite supply for our ships by the payment of increased wages and improved accommodation.

‘In our altered circumstances, when our shipowners no longer derive any special support from the State, and are very properly left, like everybody else, to depend upon themselves, it would be unjust to re-enact the apprenticeship laws, and compel them to train boys, who might hereafter be required to man the Royal Navy.

‘Nor, on the other hand, would it be just to ask the Government to bear the expense of training-ships, from which shipowners could



draw their supplies of seamen. We have no right to ask the State to do that which we can do for ourselves; and why should we go cap in hand to the Government, and beg that other people may be taxed for our benefit?'

It would clearly be contrary to public policy for the State to undertake the training of seamen for the benefit of shipowners. The supply of seamen is, after all, a question of wages, and a proposal to establish training-ships at the public charge, if it were made solely for the purpose of enabling a privileged section of employers to obtain skilled labour at a rate below the market value, could not be sustained.

The aid of the State must be given solely for Naval Reserve purposes.

At the same time it may be urged that shipowners are entitled to some consideration, because, as it was put by Mr. Graves to Mr. Lindsay's Committee, 'when any want is felt in the Navy the competition for an A.B. is so great, that we have to raise our wages in competition against the Navy to retain our men.' The effect of the sudden demands of a maritime war upon the limited supply of the nautical labour market was conspicuously illustrated in 1853 and 1854, when the wages of merchant seamen were advanced from 40s. to 50s. a month, at which rate they had stood for many years, with little variation, to 60s., 70s., and 80s. per month, which they maintained throughout the pressure of the Crimean War.

Shipowners feel especially the pressure of a war.

The Registrar-General of Seamen, in his memorandum on the organisation of the Naval Reserve, gave a rough calculation of the charge imposed upon shipowners during the period in question:— 'The sum paid to the seamen of the United Kingdom, employed in navigating the foreign-going and home trade ships, river steamers, yachts, &c., taking it at the low average of 40s. per month per man, is 400,000*l.* per month, or 4,800,000*l.* per annum, and a rise of every 10s. per month on this is 100,000*l.* per month, or 1,200,000*l.* per annum out of the pockets of shipowners. During the Crimean War the rise was in some trades considerably more than 10s. a month.

'There are few, I believe, who are aware of these facts. Owners of large first-class ships do not suffer so much, because their vessels are taken up by Government, and they make their contracts with a view to these contingencies, but the advance of seamen's wages operates on the whole commercial marine, and shipowners have now no exclusive protection, and must contend with foreigners who are not subject to this pressure.'

When the burdens, which must fall on the shipowners in time of war, are properly appreciated, it will not be regarded as an argument against any proposal, originally made, with a view to strengthen the

naval resources of the country, that it incidentally confers a benefit upon the shipping interest. On the other hand, unless the ship-owners are prepared to pay the expense, the number of boys to be trained in the school-ships, maintained or subsidised by the State, must be determined solely by the varying requirements of the Navy and the Naval Reserve.

Liverpool.

The Liverpool Committee, in suggesting Government assistance, submit, 'That this is not simply a shipowners' question, but one of national importance, and should be treated accordingly by the Legislature. It is accepted as an axiom that in case of war England must depend almost entirely on her Royal Navy. To supply the necessities of war (war which would now be prompt and short), the Navy must be recruited, to a large extent, from the mercantile marine. Where, it is asked, are the thoroughly disciplined good men to be obtained, for should the very cream of what we now have be drafted into the Navy, our mercantile ships and steamers would be simply unmanned, and it would not do for our enormous commerce to be thus brought to a standstill.

'For England's honour, in the interest of her commerce, as well as in the interests of life and property, it is the bounden duty of the Government to see that our seamen are of a superior and reliable character.'

The Liverpool Committee have consistently adhered to the same argument in each of their successive Reports. In a later Report they say:—'This Committee, as in its former Reports, cannot recommend a compulsory apprenticeship system, nor can it recognise it to be the duty of Government to train sailors simply for the mercantile marine; but it recognises fully the duty of Government to provide efficient Royal Naval Reserves, and believes that these can only be obtained by training-ships specially established for this object, and in number sufficient to train up to the requirements of the Navy.

'The primary condition, upon which boys are to enter these training-ships, should be that of connection with the Royal Navy, which should be continued on leaving these ships by a scale of retaining fees to be determined upon.

'This class of trained men would virtually supersede the present Royal Naval Reserve men. There would still be a considerable number of men in the mercantile marine not connected with the Reserves, but the latter would obtain a preference undoubtedly, and would get better pay. Further, the Reserve element would exercise an ameliorating influence on the other men.'

London.

The same arguments have been used by the London shipowners.

In addressing Sir Charles Adderley at the Board of Trade, Mr. Donald Currie said: 'With regard to national interests they knew that the Navy must depend on the mercantile marine, as the mercantile marine must depend upon the Navy. Interchangeableness of seamen in these two services would be of advantage to the Navy and to the mercantile marine. In the interest of both, let us have a supply of seamen by means of training-ships and other judicious regulations.'

Mr. Donald  
Currie.

The Commission of 1859 recommended that training-ships should be established solely with the object of recruiting seamen for the Naval Reserve, and their proposals for the attainment of this object were approved, from the same point of view, by the Commission on Unseaworthy Ships. The Admiralty and the shipowners should combine together in carrying out a work which, if it be successfully conducted, will be alike beneficial to the nation at large and to the mercantile marine. As to the precise amount to be given in view of the service to be rendered in recruiting for the Naval Reserve, that is a question which can only be determined by the combined wisdom of the Admiralty and the Board of Trade. It is for the officers responsible for the naval defence of the country to consider what shall be the standard of strength at which the Naval Reserve shall be maintained. The necessary number of the Reserve having been fixed, it then remains for us to ascertain how far we may rely on the merchant service in its actual condition to supply the men we require.

Manning  
Commis-  
sion.

The cost of twelve training-ships was estimated by the Commission of 1860 at 40,000*l.* a year, and for this sum they assumed that 1,200 boys, approved by the naval authorities, would be annually furnished to maritime occupations. If the shipowners made use of these ships, the number of boys would be doubled. When we consider that our principal defence against invasion must be furnished by a well-trained body of seamen, the small expenditure proposed may be regarded as an insurance effected on the property of the nation; and if some twenty years ago a Royal Commission under the presidency of Viscount Cardwell, a zealous and able advocate of economy, recommended a grant of 40,000*l.* a year for these training-ships, ought we not cheerfully to pay an equal, or, if need be, a larger sum, when the insurable value of the property of the nation has been so largely augmented, and when other Powers have unfortunately been induced to make such great additions to their standing forces both by sea and land?

Cost of  
training-  
ships.

Proposals for granting money from the public funds towards the



Recent Act  
of Con-  
gress.

maintenance of training-ships have been approved by the Congress of the United States. American shipowners have experienced the same difficulty that we have encountered in obtaining seamen. An Act of the Legislature of New York authorised the Board of Education of that city to maintain Nautical Schools, to be conducted under the supervision of the Chamber of Commerce, and under an Act of Congress of June 1874 authority was given for the use of certain national vessels for training purposes, and officers were to be supplied by the Navy to act as superintendents in these school-ships. It was specially provided that no person should be received at such schools as a punishment for crime. The discipline and routine of the Navy were to be observed as far as practicable. The boys were to be trained for a period varying from eighteen months to two years, when they were to be awarded certificates of rating and general character. Having made one voyage, boys desirous of continuing their studies in navigation, so as to qualify themselves as mates or captains, could be again received on board the school-ships. Under this Act the Navy Department fitted out a man-of-war for the State of New York, and it was intended to establish similar vessels at Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and San Francisco.

## CHAPTER IX.

## PLANS FOR TRAINING SEAMEN.

THE system of training in the Navy itself is most excellent, and surpasses in its results anything hitherto achieved by the efforts of philanthropic societies, which have established training-ships at our commercial ports. The boys reared in the Navy become the finest seamen in the world. Originally selected with the greatest care, and afterwards supplied with abundant food, exercised in a manner which develops their physical powers to the utmost, and breathing an invigorating air, they become the finest specimens of the man-of-war's man which can be seen in any service.

Training  
in the  
Navy:

popular;

The one objection to the training in the Navy is its immense cost as compared with the ships maintained by charitable contributions. The average expense per head of each boy on board the industrial school-ships is 19*l.*, on board the independent ships 21*l.* 6*s.*, and on board the reformatory ships 20*l.* 7*s.* Captain Wilson estimated the cost of training boys in the Navy at 40*l.*

too costly,

Moreover, it must in fairness be admitted, that we cannot make a just comparison unless we take into view the quality of the dietary and the efficiency and completeness of the instruction, the appliances for drill, and the number of instructors. If then it be tested by the results, it may be found that the training system on board the private ships is not more economical than the training in the Navy.

but most  
complete.

It should be stated, in explanation of the difference of cost, that the boys in the Navy have the advantage of instruction from a much greater number of instructors, with superior appliances, and that they have a much more expensive dietary.

The number of boys in training in the Navy, notwithstanding the acknowledged costliness of this plan of recruiting for the service, was increased from 2,421 in 1869, to 3,500 in 1872. The expense involved, and the difficulty of introducing a greater number of boys into Her Majesty's ships, without impairing their efficiency as vessels

of war, make it impossible that an increase in the number of boys under training in the Navy can be entertained. It has, therefore, been suggested that the two systems should be combined, and that training-ships should be established in our principal ports, supported partly by private subscription, partly by a subsidy from the national exchequer, and partly by contributions from the parents of the boys themselves.

School-ships have been recommended as a means of preventing the deterioration of seamen by all the committees and commissions which have considered this question in the present century.

The Manning Commission insisted that the boys selected for the Government training-ships should be of respectable parentage, strong and healthy, and approved by the inspecting officers on board the Coastguard ships. The school-ships were to be under the Registrar-General of Seamen and the Board of Trade. The military part of the training was to be conducted by the officers of the Coastguard. On the completion of their training a limited number of boys were to be allowed to enter the Navy.

The Liverpool Committee who have of late years been mainly instrumental in keeping this question before the public, have suggested that only boys who, with the approval of their parents or guardians, had selected a sea-life should be admitted to share the benefits of the training-ships. The vessels were not to be of the reformatory class, and none but boys of good character and physique were to be admitted.

Besides the 100 boarders before referred to, the school-ship would, according to the scheme of the Manning Commission, be open to all children residing in the ports. These last would be day scholars and would contribute weekly.

The school-ships should be placed under the Board of Trade. This would be more convenient, because if day scholars were received the ship must always be moored in the port with ready access to the shore.

When the system had been perfected, it was thought that it might be possible to dispense with special training-ships for the Navy, and to train boys both for the Navy and the merchant service in the same vessel. The Commissioners anticipated as the result of such an arrangement 'greater economy in regard to the training-ships, and the creation of those kindly feelings between the boys destined for the two services, which it was of the utmost importance to encourage.' The Royal Commission suggested that the number of boys to be nominated every year by the authorities might be fixed at 1,200, and that an equal number might be furnished by the sea-



ports. Thus 2,400 boys would be supplied annually to the marine of this country; and the Commissioners believed that the whole of the number would be readily absorbed by the shipowners. Indentures of apprenticeship were to be managed by the Registrar-General of Seamen. At the end of an apprenticeship of four years a sailor was to be eligible for, and the Commissioners believed that the majority would be willing to join, the Royal Naval Reserve. The engagement to serve in the Reserve was to be in the first instance limited to a period of five years. These recommendations of the Royal Commissioners have been adopted, with slight modifications, by Sir Frederick Grey, Mr. W. S. Lindsay, and other eminent authorities who have more recently studied the question.

In 1867 the Admiralty and the Board of Trade appointed a joint committee to inquire into the best means of carrying out the plan, but it was feared that the expense might form a serious item in the estimates, and the project was abandoned.

Sir Frederick Grey, in a paper originally printed for private circulation, proposed that ten ships should be stationed at the principal ports, each capable of receiving 300 lads. The boys are to be entered in the training-ships between the ages of fifteen to sixteen and a half, and at the age of eighteen they are to be rated as ordinary seamen, and discharged into a ship-of-war to serve one year.

With regard to the period of service in the Navy, Sir Frederick Grey subsequently thought it right to introduce a modification in the plan originally proposed. He found that in 1871 the number of continuous service seamen but little exceeded 17,000, and that under the present system of not allowing any man to continue to serve after completing his time for pension, the 3,000 boys in the training-ships would probably not supply the waste of a larger number. In order, therefore, to keep up the numbers of our trained merchant seamen, and to avoid the inconvenience of frequent discharges, he proposed to modify the above scheme by lengthening the period of service in a ship of war from one to three years; the effect would be to supplement the continuous service seamen by a body of about 5,000 trained short service men, of whom from 1,500 to 1,600 would pass annually into the merchant service and the Reserve; and the link between the two services, at that time wholly broken, would be restored.

After their year of service in the Navy, the young seamen, trained in the school-ships, were to join the Second-class Naval Reserve, and to receive an annual retainer of 2*l.* 10*s.* After having been four years in the Second-class Reserve, they were to be promoted, if found eligible, to the First-class Reserve.

Each training-ship should be calculated to receive 300 boys, and, as on an average they would remain two years on board, the number discharged into the Navy annually (allowing a waste of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or 15 per cent. in the two years) would be 127, and 120 would pass from the Navy annually into the Second-class Reserve. If, then, ten of these ships only were established, 1,200 well-trained lads would pass annually from the Navy into the Reserve. It might be hoped that if the system succeeded it would be extended so far as to supply 2,000 ordinary seamen to the Reserve in each year, and thus when it had been at work for ten years, 20,000 men, of whom the oldest would be only twenty-eight years of age, would have been well educated and thoroughly drilled and trained in the Royal Navy.

Sir Frederick Grey assumed that, under an improved system, the annual cost of each boy would be 25*l*. The cost of each boy on his entry into the Navy would thus be 50*l*. Half of this cost might be defrayed by the seaports. The annual expense to the Government of 3,000 boys would then be 37,500*l*., and if 5,000 boys were kept in training, in order to supply 2,000 seamen to the Reserve, the cost would be 62,500*l*.

The whole cost of the Reserve, assuming the numbers given to be adopted, would thus be :—

5,000 boys at 12 <i>l</i> . 10 <i>s</i> . per annum . . . . .	£62,500
7,000 Second-class Reserve at 2 <i>l</i> . 10 <i>s</i> . . . . .	17,500
18,000 First-class Reserve at 6 <i>l</i> . . . . .	108,000
Drill pay and lodging money . . . . .	50,000
Established charges . . . . .	80,000
	<hr/>
	£318,000

The principle of passing seamen, trained in the mercantile marine, through the Navy, for a short period of service, has been approved by many shipowners. Mr. T. M. Mackay told the Manning Commission that he would have at least 10,000 to 15,000 more boys in our training-schools for a couple of years, and then let them pass through the Navy for three years, and they could then go upon the Reserve and enter our mercantile service. 'We should then,' he added, 'have men with some self-respect and education and discipline.'

Mr. Lindsay's plan.

A plan, similar in its main features to that of Sir Frederick Grey, was proposed by Mr. Lindsay, but he advised that the State, instead of bearing the whole expense of educating the boys entered for the Reserve, should contribute an annual payment not exceeding 5*l*. to 10*l*. per head, for every boy in training. He objected to the con-

tinuance of retaining fees after a boy has completed his year's service in the Navy. On the other hand, he recommended a liberal pension to commence at the age of fifty.

'If, then,' he proceeded, 'still larger reserves of men than I have indicated are considered desirable, I should suggest some such scheme as the following. At present the Government supplies, free of cost, the use of old ships of war for the purpose of school-ships, several of which are stationed at various commercial ports, and in them there is always a considerable number of boys training for the merchant service. If the system were reorganised, and boys were admitted to these ships only on the condition that when they had finished their apprenticeship in a merchant vessel, they were to serve one or two years in a man-of-war, the State paying (beyond the allowance made for education) 5*l.* or 10*l.* per head towards the expense of their maintenance and education in the training-ship, and giving them the usual pay when on board the man-of-war, we should thus create a most valuable and powerful Reserve, and could dispense with the costly training vessels under the control of the Admiralty. One year's service in the Royal Navy, while affording the means of obtaining the requisite knowledge of gunnery, would materially improve our merchant seamen. They would gain habits of discipline, which they would not otherwise learn, and their intercourse with the seamen of the Royal Navy would tend materially to narrow the gulf which unfortunately still exists between the services. Five thousand boys trained in these school-ships for the mercantile marine, and serving only for one year in the Navy after they had finished their apprenticeship, would in time give us 60,000 trained seamen, who might be retained ready for service when required, at a comparatively small cost to the country. Even if we adhered to our present system of maintaining a Reserve by means of a retaining annual fee of 6*l.* a head, we should save the 6*l.* per annum which we now expend in training the men of our Royal Naval Reserve force. But by the plan which I venture to suggest, our dependence upon that force would be materially strengthened, and the cost greatly reduced.'

Mr. Lindsay strongly objected to the present mode of payment by retainer. He recommended that a pension of 20*l.* a year, commencing at the age of fifty, should be given to men who had served continuously in the Reserve from the completion of their training in the school. The details of this scheme are given in the chapter on Pensions.

It will be observed that the plans of Mr. W. S. Lindsay and Sir Frederick Grey were, as to the system of training, substantially the



Sir F.  
Grey's and  
Mr. Lind-  
say's plans  
compared.

same. The scheme of Mr. Lindsay was, however, less specific as to the age at which the young seaman should commence his service in the Navy. Sir Frederick Grey recommended that the trained boys should be transferred direct from their training-ships, while Mr. Lindsay contemplated an intervening period of apprenticeship in the mercantile marine. In the one case the young seaman would be a more experienced sailor before joining the Navy. In the other he would go into the Navy with no habits antagonistic to the discipline of a man-of-war to unlearn.

Payment  
by pension  
a more ad-  
vantageous  
plan for the  
exchequer.

Sir Frederick Grey also proposed to continue the system of retaining fees, which Mr. W. S. Lindsay advised the Government to give up. If boys can be induced to undergo an apprenticeship to the sea, and to serve for a short period in the Navy, with a subsequent obligation to remain for a lengthened period in the Reserve, for the present advantage of a Government subsidy during their period of training, and the remote advantage of a pension in their old age, a much better bargain will have been made on behalf of the exchequer than under the existing system of large retaining fees to the Reserve.

Plan of  
Liverpool  
Committee.

The proposal of the Liverpool Committee was that the Admiralty and the mercantile marine should jointly train up to the requirements of the Navy for the Royal Naval Reserves only. The Liverpool Committee suggested that there should be but few training-ships, in the first instance, and that the number should gradually be increased as the necessity arose. They thought that ultimately four ships would be required for Liverpool, four for London, and twelve other vessels distributed at the remaining principal ports of the kingdom. They proposed in addition, in order to enable the boys to attain greater professional proficiency, that a small cruising brig should be attached to different stations, one to London, one to Liverpool, and a sufficient number for the other ports. In these vessels a complement of senior boys, with three or four officers, might cruise for a few weeks at a time. The scheme they proposed might, they thought, probably give 5,000 or 6,000 good Royal Naval Reserve men per annum; and the Committee believed that the encouragement proposed to shipowners to take apprentices would increase supplies from that source likewise.

With regard to administrative control, as the training-ships would be established specially to supply recruits to the Naval Reserve, the Liverpool Committee suggested 'that the management of these training-ships should be vested in persons to be appointed by the Government and mercantile marine; the ships to be periodically inspected by an officer appointed by the Admiralty.'

The Admiralty have shown their disposition to co-operate with shipowners in the development of a good system of training for seamen.

Suggestion  
by Captain  
Wilson,  
R.N.

On November 12, 1875, a circular was issued by the Admiralty, addressed to the managing committees of the various training-ships, containing rules and regulations for the establishment of a third class of the Royal Naval Reserve.

The Admiralty offer a sum of 3*l.* for every boy, trained in a training-ship, who joins the Royal Naval Reserve, and 25*l.* for each boy, similarly trained, who joins the Royal Navy.

It seems unlikely, however, that any of the existing ships would be able to comply with the conditions laid down by the Admiralty.

To meet the requirements of the mercantile marine it is desirable to provide training-ships worked on the principles of Greenwich School, with this difference, that throughout the regulations 'mercantile marine' should be substituted for 'Royal Navy.' The legitimate source whence recruits should be obtained would be the sons of seafaring men, physically, therefore, of a higher standard than those trained in the present ships. Candidates would be admitted by virtue of the service claims of their fathers. As at Greenwich, no boy should be admitted, or allowed to remain, after thirteen years of age, unless pledged for sea service, and it might be well to make the lowest age of admission eleven instead of ten years, so as to reduce the proportion of those (which at Greenwich is much too large) who go from the school to shore employment. No boy should be sent to sea from the school-ships until he had been *at least* two years under nautical training, and not then except with a certificate of proficiency from the Board of Trade.

The system of instruction should be alike in *all* training-ships, which would enable Government on entering a boy from the merchant training service, to pay the establishment for the amount of instruction he had received before entry into the Royal training-ship. In the Navy, for example, all the instructions, school, gunnery and seamanship, are divided into four classes, the fourth being the highest.

Uniformity.

The class in school which a boy reaches must depend much on his previous education, but the gunnery and seamanship may, speaking roughly, be divided into four periods of three months each. If, therefore, a merchant training-ship, working on the same system as a royal training-ship, sends a boy up for entry who could pass the examination required of those leaving the second class, the establishment he has left should be entitled to the cost of six months' training

in a royal training-ship. If he were able to pass the fourth-class examinations in both subjects, for a first-class boy, a sum equal to a year's cost should be paid. A competent knowledge, both of gunnery and seamanship, must be attained, for there can be no gain to Government unless the candidate is equally good, both in gunnery and seamanship.

M. Dumont's proposal to establish training-ships in France.

In conclusion, I may call attention to a scheme submitted to the Committee of Inquiry on the French mercantile marine in 1863, by M. Dumont, Judge of the Tribunal of Commerce of the Seine. M. Dumont proposed that schools for apprentices to the sea should be established in all the great centres of population situated on the coast or the principal rivers of France, and that apprentices should remain on board from the age of twelve to sixteen, and should then perform their six years' service in the Navy, after which they were to remain liable to serve for a further period of five years.

As an introduction to a plan of my own, submitted with diffidence to the public, it has been deemed necessary to review some of the numerous schemes for training seamen, which have been proposed by high authorities on maritime affairs. Throughout the volume, as it has been already explained, I lay no claim to originality. The merit, if any there be, of the present compilation consists in the patient industry bestowed on the task of collecting together the opinions and information of others, with the view of enabling those who have no special knowledge of the subjects here treated, to determine for themselves the relative merits of the many plans now under public discussion for the amelioration of the seaman's condition, and for the revival of the fine seamanship of the olden time.



## CHAPTER X.

## GOVERNMENT TRAINING-SHIPS.

IN any plan for lending the aid of the Government to the training of seamen, it is important to keep in view the results which must inevitably follow from an extensive interference with the ordinary course of the labour market. The supply of labour is regulated by the same laws which determine the value of all useful and necessary commodities. It is proportionate, that is to say, to the demand. Where wages are good, or the conditions of life agreeable and salubrious, labour is abundant. It is scarce, or of very inferior quality, in occupations which are ill-paid or disagreeable. When, therefore, we hear louder and more grievous complaints from shipowners than from employers in other trades, we may attribute the scarcity of competent mariners to the superior advantages afforded by occupations on shore. If the Government interferes injudiciously by training up, at the public expense, a considerable number of seamen, the artificially increased supply of skilled nautical labour must lead to a reduction of wages; and, by making the employment of the sailor relatively less attractive, it will, in the end, aggravate rather than remove the difficulties now experienced by shipowners. The wisest men in the shipping trade have themselves fully appreciated these essential conditions of the problem with which they have to deal; and they have deprecated the interference of the Government, except in so far as it may be necessary for the purpose of training seamen for service in the Naval Reserve.

In connection with this latter force, the interference of the Government, even to the extent of establishing additional training-ships of their own in the commercial ports, might be defended by arguments the strength of which would be recognised by the strictest political economist. The training up of seamen for the Navy is a concern of the country at large, and not a burden to be imposed on any particular class. The Naval Reserve was established with the view of putting an end to panics, of frequent occurrence, and reflecting little credit on the nation. No attempt, however, has yet been

Superior  
seamen re-  
quired for  
Naval  
Reserve.

made to establish the thorough system of training which constituted the pith and marrow of the scheme of the Manning Commission of 1859.

A large proportion of the seamen in the mercantile marine are unequal, in point of physique, to the work of fighting the great guns; and we require for the Navy a sufficient number of selected British seamen trained for naval warfare, on whose services we can depend in time of war.

Strength  
of the  
Reserve.

Here a question arises as to the number at which our Naval Reserve should be maintained. The subject will be discussed elsewhere in greater detail. It will be sufficient for the present purpose to state that, according to the last report of the Admiral Superintendent, the numbers are as follows:—

1st Class	.	.	.	.	.	11,519
2nd Class	.	.	.	.	.	5,549
3rd Class	.	.	.	.	.	115
Total	.	.	.	.	.	17,183

The numbers to be maintained in future have been fixed at:—

1st Class	.	.	.	.	10,000
2nd and 3rd Classes	.	.	.	.	10,000
Total	.	.	.	.	20,000

The maximum strength of the Naval Reserve has been considerably reduced under the new regulations; and it is to be observed that a much more numerous Naval Reserve has been recommended by great naval authorities.

Sir Frederick Grey contemplated a force of 18,000 men for the First-class, and 14,000 men for the Second-class Reserve.

The Manning Commission of 1859 proposed that the Reserve force should be composed of 60,000 men, including 20,000 men constituting the First-class Naval Reserve, and 10,000 Naval Coast Volunteers, a force corresponding to the new Second-class Reserve.

Sir Thomas Hastings, in his memorandum on Coast Defence, which represents the views of naval officers in the earlier days of a Steam Navy, suggested that the Coast Militia should have a strength of from 15,000 to 18,000 men.

For our present purpose it shall be assumed that the standard strength of the Naval Reserve, as laid down under existing regulations, is not inadequate. The proposal, therefore, for additional training-ships is not made with a view to increase the strength of the force.

It should further be stated that the rules prescribed by the Admiralty for a Third-class Reserve constitute a satisfactory plan for giving encouragement to the private training-ships, by the payment of a reasonable subsidy, in return for certain defined services, to be rendered in the recruitment of youths for the Reserves.

Third-class Reserve.

The radical defect of the present system is that it absolutely prevents any interchange of seamen between the two branches of the national marine service. The Royal Navy is utterly unknown to the great majority of the merchant seamen; and the obligation to serve in Her Majesty's ships is viewed as a hardship, because the nature of the duties is so imperfectly understood.

Separation of Navy from mercantile marine.

The remedy is to be found in introducing into the Navy a certain number of men, engaged for a short term of service, but bound to serve a considerable number of years in the Reserve. These men should have received a preliminary training under the Admiralty.

It seems, therefore, highly desirable to make an effort to combine the Royal Navy and the merchant service more closely than heretofore, by establishing training-ships at the commercial ports, under the management of the Admiralty, and maintained entirely at the public expense. The scheme of the Manning Commission should be followed in all the details of organisation. In the first instance the ships should be few. They should ultimately be increased, if found successful, to the number recommended by the Manning Commission. In each ship 100 boys should be maintained under training for the Royal Navy, receiving the same instruction, and engaged on the same terms, as the boys in the training-ships already established for Her Majesty's service. In addition to the Admiralty boys, there should be vacancies for at least an equal number of other boys as boarders, and for as many more day-boarders, making a total of 300 boys in each ship. The instruction of all the boys not directly nominated by the Admiralty, would be paid for by their parents or their patrons. The boarders and day-boarders, for whose instruction their parents would be called upon to pay, should be taken at the lowest terms which the Admiralty could accept without incurring a positive loss.

Advantage of training-ships for both services.

Training should be organised on plan of Manning Commission.

Boys should be eligible for admission between the ages of  $15\frac{1}{2}$  and  $16\frac{1}{2}$  years. Captain Wilson is of opinion that 'the best age to take a boy for making a sailor is about  $14\frac{1}{2}$ , but the most *paying* age is a year or eighteen months older; that is to say, the *bulk* of boys joining at the younger age will stick to the sea, and become excellent seamen; but the older they are taken the larger is the proportion of loss, until we reach those who enter as *young men*, and

Age of admission.



who seldom turn out well, or remain at sea, if they can leave it. But the difference of waste between the boys of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  and  $15\frac{1}{2}$  is not equal to the additional cost of maintaining the younger class for the extra year. Thus, the regulation age should be from  $15\frac{1}{2}$  to  $16\frac{1}{2}$ ; over or under these ages the expense is increased.' The average age of entry at present is  $15\frac{1}{2}$ ; but there is great difficulty in inducing boys over fourteen years of age to join the Navy.

The boys should be required to remain in the harbour training-ships at least a year. Captain Wilson has stated that in the Navy a youth can be trained up to be a very fair ordinary seaman, including gunnery, in eighteen months.

On leaving school-ship boys should serve in Navy for a short term.

At the completion of their year in the school-ship, the boys should be required to join the Navy, and to serve from one to two years in a seagoing ship.

There is no reason to suppose that the obligation to serve in the Navy would be distasteful. It was stated by Sir Bartholomew Sullivan, in his evidence before the Manning Commission, that 'the number of boys desiring to go to sea was so great, even in inland counties, that every vacancy in the flag-ships or brigs for second-class boys was sought for by many. Yet, in addition to service as a boy, it bound them to serve seven years' service as a man, after which they had no claim for pension if they left the service. Is it therefore likely,' he asked, 'that boys will be deterred from going to sea by having to serve two years in the Navy (and afterwards being liable to serve, when required, for war) when they will have a pension of 20*l.* a year to look forward to, in addition to any pension they may have from their own fund?'

An objection may, however, be raised to the proposed short service in the Navy, on the ground that the crews of men-of-war are already too young, and that it would be impossible to maintain the Navy in a satisfactory condition as to discipline and efficiency, if the crews were composed, in a larger proportion than they now are, of novices and inexperienced men. Abundant authority may nevertheless be shown for the proposal now made. Sir Frederick Grey suggested a similar scheme, 'believing that short service men, introduced into the Navy from the merchant service, would advantageously supplement the continuous service men trained for the Navy.' The number might, he thought, be maintained at 5,000; thus, with 18,000 continuous service men, giving a force of 23,000 blue-jackets, and eventually furnishing to the merchant service a large body of valuable and well-disciplined seamen. After serving for a year in one of Her Majesty's ships, the youths trained in the proposed

Option of joining Navy or Naval Reserve.

school-ships would have the option of joining the Navy or entering the Naval Reserve, and obtaining their regular employment in the merchant service.

The able seamen of the Naval Reserve, trained in the Government school-ships, would gradually become known and highly esteemed in the merchant service. They would be superior to other seamen, and would receive better pay.

For boys entered as day-boarders, the expense would probably be completely covered by the payments from the Education Department. The principle has already been adopted that the country is under an obligation to give an education to every child, and there is no reason why the training-ships, established at the great ports, should not be regarded as public elementary schools, and receive the grant to which they may be entitled in that capacity. For those boys who entered as boarders the parents should be required to pay the bare cost of maintenance, which would not exceed tenpence a day.

Training-ships entitled to subsidy as elementary schools.

An arrangement might perhaps be made that all Royal Naval Reserve men, obtaining a certain standard of certificate, should be entitled to have one son educated at these school-ships for the Sea Service out of the Naval Votes; or if started by a voluntary merchant seamen's fund, they could always claim the grant now offered by Government for each boy leaving the school, who joined the Royal Naval Reserve.

Sons of seamen to be educated.

It is to be hoped that the proposed system of training would afford to the benevolent societies, under whose auspices school-ships have already been established, the means of co-operating with the Admiralty, for the joint advantage of the Navy and the mercantile marine. If the managing committees were disposed to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded, it would be open to them to send youths to the Admiralty ships, where they would receive a more complete education than it has been possible to give in any of the existing private school-ships, where economy must often be considered before efficiency.

The experiment of establishing training-ships for the Navy in the commercial ports need not involve a serious addition to the Navy Estimates. The expenditure would probably be within the amount set forth in a paper prepared by Sir Bartholomew Sullivan for the information of the Manning Commission of 1859. He estimated that the expense of each ship would probably be yearly :—

Cost of training-ships.

A superintendent . . . . .	£150
A chaplain . . . . .	150
A head master . . . . .	100
Two assistants, 60 <i>l</i> . and 40 <i>l</i> . . . . .	100
Four petty officers at 40 <i>l</i> . . . . .	160
Medical attendant . . . . .	80
Cook . . . . .	50
Provisions and clothing for 200 boys at 15 <i>l</i> . a year . . . . .	3,000
	<hr/>
	£3,790
	<hr/>

Books, printing, &c., would probably make the whole . £4,000

‘This,’ he said, ‘would put 100 boys to sea every year, and when the system came into full work would give for the naval service, between the ages of twenty and forty, 2,000 men from each school-ship, minus the losses by death or other causes. If we estimate these at one-half, we have still 1,000 men available at a cost of 4*l*. per head, besides the pensions.’

If the experiment proved successful, and the scheme of the Manning Commission were carried out in its integrity, the total addition to the Navy Estimates need not exceed 50,000*l*. a year.

General  
arguments  
for train-  
ing-ships.

The arguments of those who are of opinion that enough has not been done to unite the merchant service with the Royal Navy for the defence of the country, derive no inconsiderable support from the experience of recent wars. The efficiency of the Prussian military system has been signalled by its unparalleled success. In the field we cannot vie with the Continental Powers; but on the sea our superiority may be secured by a careful organisation of our vast resources. The statesman will prefer that naval preparations should be matured, not by withdrawing a large number of men from their useful labour, in a peaceful vocation, but by adding to the qualifications of our seamen a knowledge of arms, which can easily be imparted, and habits of discipline which, while they are essential in war, are not less valuable in peace. If a modification of the Rules and Regulations at present in force for the enrolment and drill of the Reserve is not enough to raise the force to the strength at which it may be necessary that it should be permanently maintained, the establishment of a certain number of training-ships at the great commercial ports will doubtless prove an effectual means of creating an adequate Reserve. While economy is justly regarded as the paramount duty of Government, of all forms of naval expenditure that involved in the establishment of training-ships will be found the most satisfactory in its results. A well-conducted training-ship



should not merely be a school of instruction in seamanship, but a place of education in the highest sense. How miserable are the haunts in which a large number of our seamen exhaust their hard earnings in degrading pleasures! To bring the seafaring population within the reach of humanising and benign influences is a difficult task, which well deserves our thoughtful consideration. Good impressions firmly fixed in early life are the best shield against temptation in later years; and thus the work of recruiting for the Naval Reserve will incidentally promote the nobler object of elevating, both in character and in intelligence, a section of our population most difficult to reach, and to whose enterprise and patriotism our national greatness is largely due.

I have systematically endeavoured to supply authorities of acknowledged weight for every opinion advanced in this work. I will, therefore, in harmony with my plan, append a summary of evidence for and against the system of training boys for the sea in buildings on shore. Buildings  
versus  
ships.

Captain Burney, in a letter to the *Times*, wrote as follows:—

‘I feel assured that it is not only a wrong, but a very costly system to coop 400 or 500 boys up in an old line-of-battle ship or frigate, where during six months (at least) in the year, owing to the ports and hatches being kept closed in bad weather, the boys are prevented from breathing the pure air.

‘I would submit for the consideration of the Committees of the training-ships “Goliath” and “Warspite,” whether it would not be better to select some place on shore near the river side, and erect masts for sail drill, and suitable buildings for dormitories (the boys could still sleep in hammocks), mess rooms, school, and seamanship instruction and trade rooms, a good lavatory and swimming bath, and above all a parade and playground, the latter being so essential for the boys’ health. The establishment being near the riverside, the boys could be exercised daily in boats.

‘A small craft attached to such an establishment, similar to the brigantine which was attached to the “Goliath,” would be most useful to send the boys away for a cruise in turn. I can speak from experience that a boy can be better trained in such an establishment than it is possible to train him in an old line-of-battle ship or frigate. In the first place, you have space for your instruction rooms and models, which you have not on board ship, and in the second place you have no holes and corners the same as in a ship, where boys can stow themselves and commit no end of mischief.

‘When I had command of Her Majesty’s gunboat “Speedy,”

tender to the "Dasher," on the Channel Islands station, we erected on shore in Jersey close to Gorey Harbour three masts equal in size to those of the "Warspite," and adjacent to the masts we built quarters for the boys with school instruction rooms and trade shops. The whole was built out of old material, and as the work was done by the men of the "Dasher" and "Speedy," an excellent training establishment for boys was produced at little or no expense. I had charge of the Gorey Training Establishment for six years, training boys for the Navy, and I can state without fear of contradiction that the boys that we sent into the Navy were equal in every respect to those sent from the other naval training-ships.

Captain Burney's letter was followed by a communication on the same subject from Mr. E. Carleton Tufnell:—

'I have also, as Inspector of Schools under the Local Government Board, had a thorough acquaintance with both systems of training. I was the official inspector of the "Goliath" from its establishment, and its excellent management under Captain Bouchier made it difficult for me, as it has most visitors to that ship, to imagine that anything better could be invented for the purpose in view. Yet the experience I have had of the opposite system, recommended by Captain Burney, convinces me that the training-ship plan is in every point inferior to the plan of housing the boys on shore.

'The schools belonging to the Stepney Union were for several years conducted on the land plan. The guardians erected a full-sized ship in the school-yard, fully equipped it with sails, rigging, &c., caused the sailor class to sleep in hammocks in a room imitative of a ship's cabin, engaged a sailor to instruct the boys in sea matters, and supported a twelve-oared boat on the Thames, in which I have frequently been rowed by the boys down the river. The result was that of 229 boys sent to service in five years, no less than 183 went to sea. The school could not supply the demand for these boys from sea captains, who declared that the knowledge thus acquired by these youthful sailors was worth two years of age. They preferred boys of thirteen thus trained to boys of fifteen untrained.

'This mode of forming sailors has been adopted by the celebrated schools of Mettray in France, and Ruysselede in Belgium; and I must beg leave to quote the opinion of Mr. Hall, the late Recorder of Doncaster, on this subject, as given in a lecture by him:—

"When I first saw this contrivance at Mettray, I could not refrain from intimating a doubt as to its practical utility, but I found I was mistaken. In France, the experiment was tried at the suggestion of the Minister of Marine himself, and the youths so exercised

at Mettray are received on real shipboard as sailors, not as lads. At Ruysselede, the success is still more striking: in the course of the last year, the second of the experiment, no fewer than sixty-four colonists entered the mercantile and three the military marine, and their conduct has been so superior that the establishment is overwhelmed with applications from shipowners.”

Mr. Shaw-Lefevre may be quoted as a strong advocate for barracks, rather than receiving-ships. His experience, looking at the matter from the point of view of an economist, showed that nothing was more expensive than a floating house. He believed it would be a wise thing to do away with many of these old floating houses in our home ports, and to house the men in permanent barracks on shore.

A shore establishment appears to be the only way of meeting the religious difficulty in Ireland. A leading article in the *Nation* urged that training institutions should be established, and points out that ‘it would be as cheap to build a house as it is to fit up the condemned old hulks which the Government offer as training-ships; and the land schools would be healthier and more convenient habitations. There is a great difficulty in properly ventilating a training-ship with two or three hundred boys crowded between decks; and in the case of Ireland, there would be manufactured a further difficulty in the provision of religious training for the pupils. This difficulty has been happily got over by the Industrial Schools Act, and it is evident that a naval school on land, such as we contemplate, might be founded and carried on under this Act.’

The better opinions would seem to be that the superiority of a ship or a building must be determined with reference to local circumstances. There are advantages in both plans. The building is more economical. The ship has a more distinctively nautical character.

As a means of making the instruction received in training-ships more practical, it had been recommended that a small cruising brig should be attached to important stations, such as London or Liverpool, and a complement of senior boys would be embarked to cruise at sea for a few weeks at a time. Without practice in a seaman’s work aloft in a seaway, the lads are unable to render efficient service when they join a sea-going ship; and thus we see boys taken from Norwegian and Swedish ships on board British vessels, even at a time when a difficulty is experienced in finding openings for lads brought up in our training-ships. The reason is obvious. A lad who has been a few months actually at sea is more useful than one of superior



education, and with an equally good theoretical knowledge of seamanship, who has never served in a sea-going ship.

It is to be regretted that the training in the ships maintained by the philanthropic societies, and the guardians of the poor, has not been made more complete by sending the boys into sea-going vessels. The ship maintained by the public authorities of New York is kept constantly under way in Long Island, and is frequently despatched on an extended ocean voyage.

As the experiment which has been tried at New York is the first of its kind, a detailed account of a cruise made by the nautical school-ship may be read with interest. The ship returned to New York in April 1873, and the following narrative is transcribed from the *New York Times* :—

‘The “Mercury” left her anchorage off Hart’s Island, November 18, 1872, since which time she has visited Madeira, Las Palmas, Rio Janeiro, and St. Thomas, giving her boy-crew every opportunity to become proficient in seamanship and navigation.

‘It is almost impossible to enumerate all that has been accomplished by this cruise, or to tell of all the benefits that have accrued to the boys, for it may safely be said that when the ship left New York it had on board many young scrapegaces, who would in time have grown to be vagabonds and outcasts; but in place of these the ship brings home a crew that will make good seamen, who have made a winter passage of the Atlantic, and aided in navigating the ship a distance of nearly 15,000 miles. In doing this they have provided themselves with a self-supporting occupation, and are in a position to make themselves respectable members of society. When the ship left New York many of the boys could neither read nor write, and had become criminal through lack of moral training and ignorance. Now these causes are, in a great measure, removed by attending school each day; all have obtained a primary education, and their moral and spiritual welfare has been looked after by preceptors of their own particular creeds. Such instruction must necessarily be productive of good, and it is only just to add that the patrons of the institution will be surprised to see the manly set of boys we bring back, when we contrast them with those that were taken away. It is not to be presumed for a moment these street-boys have been converted into angels, or the “good boy” of the story-book; but they have been shown that there is something better to live for than stealing, and a prospect has been opened to them of becoming useful citizens.

‘Punishments among the boys have been by no means frequent,

chiefly because on board ship they are not in a position to do any great wrong, and their principal offences have consisted of slight derelictions of duty, or lagging behind the others when orders were given. All such circumstances, being opposed to the discipline of the ship, were, of course, corrected; but, with few exceptions, stern punishments have been unnecessary; in fact, it would be difficult to control the same number of boys in any other situation so easily. Out upon the open ocean, these boys, though confined, enjoy as much liberty as anyone on board, and soon lose all recollections of their commitment; and being thus removed from their evil and pernicious associations, without experiencing any of the restraints of captivity, their reformation becomes possible. Finding that they are treated well, and that attention to their work will secure them the respect of their officers, they become dutiful and obedient, and endeavour to do well, chiefly because they find they will gain nothing by doing otherwise. Altogether, the boys are a jolly set, no better and certainly no worse than the majority of boys of the same ages. They work the ship, and at times the work is hard, but they all seem to enjoy it, and take as much interest in all that is going on as any on board. Nothing is allowed to interfere with their regular duties, but they nevertheless have plenty of time for amusement, and, as long as they keep within bounds, they can do as they like. Beside their ship duties, and the navigation class, the boys are instructed in the manual of arms with muskets and swords, and drilled in the working of the large guns. Under the instruction of the officers on board they learn to make ropes, and also to splice them, and a variety of seamanlike exercises.

‘All the boys have had more or less money with them, and at the various ports the ship has touched, they have purchased living relics, as keepsakes to take home. At Madeira and Las Palmas they purchased canary or other birds. At Rio, parrots, monkeys, and marmosets were obtained, so that the forward part of the ship has become a miniature menagerie. During the succession of fine days that we met with as we sailed through the tropics, all the birds would be brought on deck, and their lively voices and bright plumage would add a gaiety to the scene that might otherwise be wanting. When the boatswain sounds a call, all the parrots mimic him, the monkeys endeavour to outcry them, and the canaries, not to be outdone, pipe up also, and the consequence is a concert of rare quality. Besides the birds that have been purchased, many have been caught as they flew over the ship while we were in the West Indies.

‘Now that the ship has arrived, many applications will undoubtedly

be made to obtain the boys discharged, but if parents knew when their boys were well off they would leave them where they are. Many of their boys are now sufficiently advanced to be shipped as able seamen, but many others require an additional training, and it is certainly objectionable that they should be removed from the ship with their nautical education but half complete, to be returned to their old associations. Much trouble has been taken with them, and it were well if it were made to bear its influence beyond the possibility of failure before they were discharged.

‘After serving one year in these harbour ships, during which time they should be systematically and carefully instructed in the simpler duties of sea-life, and in the rudiments of an English education, they should be transferred to the cruising training-ships.

‘These latter should be kept constantly cruising on the American coast for the space of three years—in the summer on the north-eastern coast; in the winter in the West Indies.

‘These training-ships should be “fourth rate,” well equipped steamers, fully rigged to sail, and should be required to cruise under canvas. They should be styled, “the ships of the Home Squadron of Evolution,” and be as much a part of the regular cruising force of the Navy as the vessels for foreign service.’

It were much to be desired that the ships now moored at Greenhithe, Purfleet, and elsewhere in the Thames, as also those maintained in the Mersey, and at other ports, should be vessels of a class adapted for practical navigation under sail. Should this suggestion be deemed too costly to be adopted, sailing brigs must be provided, in which the boys may be frequently exercised.



## CHAPTER XI.

## APPRENTICESHIP FOR THE NAVAL RESERVE.

THE scheme sketched out in the preceding pages is an attempt to organise an effectual system of training seamen in special vessels. The establishment of training-ships in connection with the Navy at our principal ports appears an obvious means of increasing the number of seamen eligible for the Reserves. But the training-ships—which, after all, are but an inferior substitute for the more practical experience only to be obtained in a sea-going ship—would be unnecessary, if it were by any means possible to revive the old system of compulsory apprenticeship, the abolition of which was a corollary to the repeal of the Navigation Laws. Shipowners, however, would as a body strongly, and with good reason, object to any proposals for reviving the system of compulsory apprenticeship.

Training  
in harbour  
ships an  
artificial  
system.

It has been shown elsewhere that the obligation to take apprentices was open to many abuses, and was, in point of fact, systematically evaded.

There is another objection to the plan of rearing seamen in training-ships. It is purely artificial, and, unless supplemented by practical experience at sea, it fails to produce bold, and skilful, and hardy seamen.

The objections to a purely artificial system are beginning to be felt in the Royal Navy. They are fully explained in a paper prepared by Captain Wilson on the subject:—

‘Is the Navy (he asks) as at present maintained, able to train as *sailors* all the men it requires? Let us see. To keep up the number of men now voted, 4,000 boys, first class (*viz.*, boys who have passed through the training course) are required, but all our ships put together do not take more than three-fifths of them, the remainder being cooped up in harbour vessels, learning little but evil. It is thus clear we have not nearly the requisite *tonnage* at sea to salt our youths properly—a state of things most detrimental to them, and the service at large; in short, we have to keep more men than

Too many  
boys in pro-  
portion to  
sea-going  
ships in  
Navy.

the ships of the Navy can possibly make into sailors, and the sooner the fact is boldly faced the better, for no half-measures will remedy this most serious evil. We now come to the question whether, with only sufficient ships at sea to absorb about 1,800 boys a year, it is advisable, so to speak, to swamp the service with 3,000? As the Navy is at present worked, it is necessary to enter them, because the profession is self-dependent and with no other source from which men are obtained; but is it absolutely unavoidable that such an unsatisfactory state of things should continue? And is there no solution to the difficulty? There can be no doubt that the Navy should train as many of its men from boyhood as possible, but there is a limit to its power of so doing, and that limit should not be exceeded. Some 1,500 boys per annum can be conveniently and advantageously disposed of in the ships usually kept at sea, but any excess of that number only injures the sea training of them all.

Same difficulty in merchant service.

A similar difficulty is experienced in the merchant service. Shipowners hesitate to take apprentices, chiefly because boys unaccustomed to the sea are useless on board ship. An interval of weeks must usually elapse before an apprentice acquires his sea legs, and he cannot in less than a year after he first goes afloat, render sufficient service to his employer to repay the cost of the provisions which he consumes. It frequently occurs that foreign boys are shipped in English vessels trading to the Baltic. These lads having previously been at sea, have become inured to the hardships of a sailor's life, and are found more useful than an English boy who has had no previous training afloat. Appreciating these and other objections to a system of compulsory apprenticeship to the sea, I endeavoured, in pamphlets published a few years since, to devise a plan for giving encouragement to shipowners to train apprentices of a class which would furnish satisfactory recruits for the Naval Reserve.

Plan for revival of apprenticeship to the sea.

In my first pamphlet, on the 'Organisation of our Naval Reserves,' it was suggested that if, for the advantage of the State, we wished to encourage shipowners to take apprentices, the propriety of offering a bonus under certain conditions was not unworthy of consideration. The ships must be sailing-ships of an approved character for the purpose. The amount of the bonus to be paid on signing indentures should not exceed 5*l.* for each apprentice. The number of apprentices should be limited to one for every 100 tons register. The apprentices should be chosen by an officer appointed by the Admiralty and the Board of Trade, and indentured to the Registrar-General of Seamen, and the apprenticeship should be for a period of four years. On the completion of his apprenticeship the young sea-

man should join the Navy for one year, receiving, on his joining one of Her Majesty's ships, a bounty of 5*l*. Having completed his year's service in the Navy, he should join the Reserve, under the conditions set forth in the scheme propounded by Sir Frederick Grey.

In a later pamphlet, a somewhat larger payment was suggested. As an inducement to shipowners to take apprentices, it was proposed that the State should pay a premium of 10*l*. each for a certain number of so-called Government apprentices. The premium was to be payable upon the signing of the indenture of apprenticeship. A further sum of 3*l*. was to be paid to the shipowner, to be expended in providing the apprentice with the most essential articles for his sea kit. During the period of his apprenticeship, the apprentice was to appear at least once a year at the office of the marine superintendent, by whom his indentures were originally registered; and, upon proof being given that the terms of the apprenticeship had been honestly fulfilled, the sum of a pound was to be paid to the owner, and a like amount to the apprentice, by way of annual bonus from the State.

Second  
plan.

The payment of these annual fees was to commence in the second year, and to be continued during the third and fourth years of the apprenticeship.

It was assumed that arrangements could easily be made for a transfer of registry from one shipping-office to another, in the event of the apprentice or his parents having changed their place of residence.

On the final completion of his apprenticeship, and upon being admitted into the Royal Navy, the apprentice was to receive a gratuity of 5*l*.

Having been duly trained in the Navy, the apprentice was to be bound to join the Reserve, and to continue liable to be called upon to serve in the fleet, until he had attained an age when he would be eligible for a pension.

While the terms proposed might probably be criticised as unduly liberal, they did not exceed the cost of training a boy for a single year in the Royal Navy.

Economy  
to be realised  
by its  
adoption.

In estimating the aggregate cost of training youths in merchant ships for service in the Reserves, some addition must be made to the sum expended on each individual, in order to allow for the waste in numbers, which, in the Royal Navy, has been found to amount to seven per cent., and is not likely to be less in the merchant service, or the private training-ships.

There is a precedent for the bonus system which is here suggested,



Precedent  
under Poor  
Law.

in the payment under the sanction of the Poor Law Board, of a premium of ten pounds to shipowners who are willing to receive pauper boys into their service, to be brought up as apprentices to the sea.

If the expenditure of local funds has been approved, surely the appropriation of the public funds for a like purpose, and with a view to the mutual advantage of the apprentice and the State, will not be regarded as an extravagant policy.

Shipowners  
in favour  
of plan.

Many shipowners of eminence have expressed their approval of the principle of such a measure.

Mr. Graves.

Mr. Graves told the Manning Commission that 'if the *shipowners were reimbursed the amount of loss which would be sustained by having a greater number of boys on board their ships for educational and State purposes than suited their own interests, they would very willingly enter into an obligation to take a modified number.*'

Mr.  
Beazley.

Mr. Beazley thought shipowners should have something for taking apprentices, and that as all the most eminent shipowners in London received a large premium with their apprentices, it was only fair that the Government should give a premium to shipowners who were willing to carry apprentices under special engagement to serve in the Naval Reserve.

Mr.  
Dunlop.

In a Circular dated January 19, 1876, Mr. Dunlop, of Glasgow, advocated a similar course.

'If the Government desire to make provision for the supply of an improved class of seamen, it can be best done by the encouragement of merchant seamen apprenticeship, and I suggest the following means:—Let the Government remove by statute the difficulties that at present exist for dissolving the indenture of an apprentice who fails to do his duty, so that shipowners may easily get rid of bad boys. Encourage carrying apprentices on board all ships by the following means:—Let each vessel, whether sailing ship or steamer, which carries one apprentice for every 250 tons of her register tonnage, receive a deduction from the light duties to which she is liable to the extent of twenty per cent.; in all questions of rating the sufficiency of crews, let two apprentices in their first and second years equal one ordinary seaman, and two apprentices in their third and fourth years equal one able seaman. With such encouragement given, while perfect freedom is granted to every shipowner to carry or to abstain from carrying apprentices, I have no hesitation in affirming that a supply of indentured apprentices, fully equal to the requirements of the country, and who will grow up efficient seamen,

will be the result, and the cost to the country and the merchant shipowner will be inappreciable. The foreigner and the ship that carries no apprentices, or too few, will share the cost of maintaining the supply by paying full light duties.'

It does not follow, however, that the payment proposed would be a bad bargain on behalf of the Government. The system of bonus may seem to be a circuitous manner of making a present to the shipowner; but it should not be viewed in that light. The training received on board a merchant ship at sea would be more practical than any which could be given in a stationary vessel, and it would be infinitely less expensive to the State.

My plan  
a good  
bargain;

In renewing, therefore, in these pages, my proposal that a direct payment should be made to the shipowners for carrying apprentices, selected by the Government, and under an engagement to join the Reserve, I think it right to say that in my judgment the unnecessary complication in the details constitutes the only real objection to the plan originally proposed.

but com-  
plicated.

I am encouraged in this belief by the following letter from Captain Murray, of the Peninsular and Oriental service, with whose assistance the original scheme was prepared:—

Captain  
Murray.

'The plan proposed by you appears to be the only resource left. No one I have met appears to be able to suggest any other. Objection only is taken to the detail, which is an admission that, in the main, it is approved. I am of opinion that the terms proposed are too favourable to the shipowner, and perhaps a little too hard on the boy to be popular. A bonus of 5*l.* or 6*l.* is sufficient, in my opinion, to cover the trouble incurred in keeping the raw lad for the first year. After that time the shipowner *would pay small wages* with advantage to himself, and so the boy would be fairly launched after the first year. I attach great importance to this *first year*. Once fairly started, in forty-nine cases out of fifty the boy is safe to become a sailor, and that is all that is wanted. Now to secure the boy for such service. After his apprenticeship, as is proposed in the scheme, he must, in my opinion, be encouraged by generous pay as he grows into manhood, made to feel a proper satisfaction and pride in being a Government servant. He must not be allowed to think himself, or be thought of by others, as a sort of Government pauper. So I would suggest an alteration in the arrangements of the plan, in the disbursement of the money, more to the apprentice and less to the shipowner. The fact of the apprentice being looked after by the officers of Government is a great advantage to that owner. He is saved all anxiety about his apprentice running away. *In certain*

*cases the apprentice would be transferred and the owner relieved of his charges.* Very little red tape ought to be seen here. Make it easy and comfortable for the shipowner. He hates trouble as much as loss of money. Only one thing ought to be kept in view, the enrolment of as many boys as possible. It is getting over the first two years that is of most importance. The law would be made simple—no parading of the Government apprentice before any particular officer, but only a report by every shipping and consular officer of such and such appearances of said apprentices, as in the usual course of shipping and paying off would necessarily come about. Such reports to be sent to one head officer, who would check the list over. The officers of the mercantile marine (superintendents) would not think this any trouble. I would also suggest only a very short period of service in a man-of-war—we only want the *seaman*—he can soon be made into the fighting man.

‘Improvements in the working of the Reserve forces could be gradually introduced, more frequent reviews and short cruises, &c., when all the Reserve seamen, old and new class, would be exercised.

‘One more suggestion about the boys. For a sum of money down shipowners might be induced to produce boys of two years’ sea service, afterwards to be received into training-ships for another year.’

Simple  
scheme  
proposed  
by certain  
associa-  
tions of  
ship-  
owners.  
Glasgow.

A simple and effectual plan of encouraging apprenticeship in the merchant service was set forth by various shipowners in the conferences held with the representatives of the Board of Trade, on the occasion of the tour of inspection made by Messrs. Gray and Hamilton to the Northern ports. At Glasgow it was proposed by the Local Marine Board that apprentices should be encouraged by a grant from the Mercantile Marine Fund, and it was suggested that a gratuity of 10% should be paid to boys, who had completed four years’ apprenticeship in the merchant service, who had received a certificate of character from their owners, and were willing to enter the Royal Navy.

Newcastle.

Mr. Milwain, of Newcastle, told the Board of Trade that, assuming that a payment was to be made, the best way would be to give it to the boy after his apprenticeship was completed.

South  
Shields.

The Local Marine Board of South Shields unanimously passed a resolution that the Board of Trade should be asked to consider the propriety of giving a bounty to apprentices, who had served an apprenticeship of four years, upon condition that the apprentice should join the Naval Reserve, or go into one of Her Majesty’s ships for two years, receiving a bounty after two years’ service in the fleet.



In lieu of the series of small payments, proposed in my former schemes, I must now express my preference for the plan of giving a bonus in a lump sum, to be divided between the shipowner and the apprentice. The bonus to the shipowner should be paid on the enrolment of the apprentice. The amount should be 5*l*. The ships in which the apprentices are to serve must be certified by an officer of the Admiralty as fit for the purpose. The bounty to the apprentice should consist in a free kit, to be supplied when he joins the Navy, and a bonus of 5*l*. in cash, to be supplemented by a further payment of 5*l*. for good conduct on the completion of his year of probationary service.

Modified  
scheme.

The distinctive features, accordingly, of this branch of the Reserve would be :—

1. Every man must have completed an apprenticeship in a merchant vessel, and served at least a year in the Navy, six months in barracks, for instruction in gunnery, and six months afloat, in order to become acquainted with the discipline required in a sea-going man-of-war.

2. There will be no retainer, and no compulsory attendance at drill.

3. The seaman, in consideration of his entering into an engagement to serve in the Navy when called upon, between the ages of twenty and fifty years, will be entitled to a pension of 12*l*. a year at the age of fifty.

It is proposed that youths entered for this branch of the Reserve should serve in the Navy between the ages of eighteen and twenty, after they have completed their indentures, for a term of not less than three years in a square-rigged vessel.

The fishermen would be ineligible for this branch of the Reserve. They would, as now, go into the Second-class Reserve, which has been so rapidly and successfully organised.

Some naval officers will object to the plan, on the ground that it will lead to an influx of raw youths into the service, who would be less docile and disciplined than boys trained in the Navy from the period of their first going afloat. This, however, is a difficulty that can be overcome with tact.

Objections  
of Navy.  
How to be  
overcome.

Captain Wilson has expressed a confident opinion, 'that men can be got from the merchant service who would, on the whole, be quite as good as the average of our young hands, whilst possessing more *nautical* experience, and who would have cost nothing for training. Seamen now, to be of real value in war, should be thoroughly drilled and disciplined as fighting men, but this cannot be done without

Captain  
Wilson.

barracks. They are already recognised as an *imperative necessity*, without which the men of the fleet never can attain to that high standard of efficiency which the country has a right to expect, and the present exigencies of the service require. With barracks, the great difficulty to entering *seamen* direct will disappear, for in them the young merchant sailor can be so completely disciplined and drilled, that he would no longer be looked on as the objectionable character he has hitherto been considered on board of a man-of-war. In entering such men it would not do to be too particular in their nautical examination, as many things required of a sailor in the Royal Navy are not thought necessary in the merchant service, and it should be borne in mind that there are certain parts of a seaman's work which can be perfectly well taught on shore, whilst there are others which must be learned afloat. Two qualities absolutely necessary, but only to be acquired in youth, and on the salt water, are *sea legs* and a *sea stomach*, and a man possessing these might, in considerably less than a year under careful instruction in barracks, be transformed into a very fair man-of-war's man.

Appren-  
tices to  
serve a year  
in Navy.

After six months had been spent in barracks, the special instructions in gunnery and the use of small-arms would be completed. The Reserve men would then be embarked in a sea-going vessel.

The experiment sketched out in the preceding pages should, like the plan proposed for the establishment of training-ships at the great ports, be commenced on a limited scale.

The Government apprentice, brought up in the mercantile marine, and bound to complete his training in the Royal Navy, would take the place of the ordinary seaman now employed in the fleet. The apprentice would be under an engagement to serve in the Navy for a period not exceeding two years; but in case the number of ships in commission was insufficient, it should be open to the Admiralty to reduce the period of service in the Navy to one year. An increased number of small sailing vessels in commission on the home and Channel stations, would provide the means of sending young seamen afloat in sea-going ships, at a comparatively small cost.

Advantages of  
short service.

A limited period of service would afford to the Navy the power of training an increased number of seamen, to take an effective part in the defence of the country.

No retainer

It is not proposed that an annual retainer should be paid to those seamen of the Royal Naval Reserve who had been brought up in the merchant service with the aid of a Government subsidy; but, as an inducement to continue in the Reserves, and to check the

tendency to sail under a foreign flag, they should receive a liberal pension, to commence at an age when failing powers too often Pension. compel the sailor to abandon the sea.

With this object in view, I would suggest that the pension to those Naval Reserve men, who were paid by a pension and not by an annual retainer, should commence at the age of fifty, and that the payment should be fixed at 1s. 6d. a day. The proposal that the payment of the Reserve should be by pension and not by retainer is supported by Captain Wilson in his recent pamphlet, where he says: 'As the time required of a Reserve man to entitle him to a pension is long, I would like to see him allowed to earn a *part of it* when unable to serve for it all—thus, if a man had, after putting in ten or fifteen years, to leave from any good reason, I would grant him a proportionate pension at the *age of fifty*.'

It has already been explained that while, on the one hand, there will be no annual retainer, on the other, annual attendance at drill would not be compulsory.

It will probably be the general opinion of naval officers that an intelligent seaman, after one or two years' service in the Navy, would have been sufficiently trained in gunnery.

As in the case of the training ships, so in the development of the schemes for the encouragement of apprentices to be trained in the mercantile marine for service in the Royal Navy, it would probably be a wiser course to proceed with deliberation in the first instance. Should the proposal be accepted, two hundred boys might be selected, in the first instance, from the same class from which boys are now taken for the training-ships attached to the Royal Navy. The entry of further candidates might be suspended until the working of the system had been tested by experience.

Commence  
with 200  
appren-  
tices.

According to the plan which I venture to propose, the seaman in the Reserve would be liberally treated by the State in the two most anxious 'ages of man.' He would receive a welcome aid in early youth, when, in our densely populated country, the struggle for daily bread is most difficult; and again, he would be befriended by the Government in the premature old age, from which the seaman too often suffers, and which deprives him of the means of earning a livelihood in his laborious and trying vocation.

While giving, in a generous spirit, a helping hand to our struggling poor, this system of State-aided apprenticeship would confer a real boon on our merchant service, by renewing that supply of well-trained seamen which will never be obtained without some methodical and well-devised system of training.



## CHAPTER XII.

## DESERTION.

Desertions most numerous where wages are high.

THE offence of desertion has never been uncommon in British merchant vessels, though, as might have been expected, it occurs most frequently in those ports where the wages on shore present irresistible temptations. Our skilled workmen are allured to the Colonies from their native country by the same attractions which draw the seamen from their ships.

The statistics of desertion, prepared for Lord Ellenborough in 1847, clearly prove that seamen only desert in large numbers in those countries where the scale of wages is unusually high.

*Return of Number of Seamen who had deserted in year ending December 31, 1847.*

Where trading to	Number of crews	Deserted abroad
Baltic . . . . .	14,666	19
United States . . . . .	12,250	4,136
France, Holland, Portugal, and Spain, and Western Islands, outside Gut of Gibraltar . . . . .	10,088	39
Mediterranean and Ports within Gut of Gibraltar . . . . .	18,508	100
South America . . . . .	6,015	244

Australia.

In Australia, at the period when the gold mines were first discovered, the desertion was not confined to seamen before the mast. It was a common practice even for captains and mates to abscond. Ships returned home manned by emancipated convicts. Crews were often so insufficient and so incompetent, that captains were obliged to keep their ships running before the wind, from whatever quarter it might happen to blow. The difficulty in preventing seamen from deserting in the Australian ports still continues. In a letter which I have before me, dated Newcastle, New South Wales, July 1875, it is stated that 'ten of the crew have run away, although everything has been done to keep them in the

ship. The crimps make a living, it is said, by transferring men from one ship to the other, and every ship has had much trouble with the crews of late. The men, who have deserted, can be shipped at a bounty of 1*l.* per head. Ships have been detained ten days for men, and then had to pay the blood money. The crimps take all the advance from the men, and give in return as a rule a box of matches, a bar of soap, and a glass of grog. So that when the men come on board they have not a second shift of clothing to go the voyage. The consequence is that in bad weather, when they are most wanted, they are sick and off duty for lack of suitable clothing.' The writer, a ship captain, adds that he has allowed some of his men to wear clothes which he has supplied, or they would otherwise have been unable to do their duty.

A difficulty has always been experienced in keeping crews together in the waters of British North America. In Canada a large number of ships are launched every year, and there is in consequence a deficient supply of seamen. Sailors, shipped at Liverpool for the voyage to Canada and back, find, on their arrival at Quebec, that they can obtain from 7*l.* to 9*l.* a month for the voyage home. Such high rates of pay are an irresistible temptation.

Desertion  
in North  
American  
ports.

It has been suggested that shipowners should engage their seamen only for the outward voyage. Such a course would, at any rate, be straightforward. The seamen would be re-engaged in the Canadian port for the run home at the rate current in America; and as there would be no engagement binding seamen to return in the same ship and for the same wages which they accepted in England, there would be no breach of agreement through desertion.

In New York desertions are more frequent than in any other port in the world, and this again arises from the high rate of wages, usually from fifty to sixty dollars a month, for voyages to European ports. The proverbial restlessness of sailors and their love of change render them an easy prey to the artifices of the crimps and runners, who infest the harbours of the New England States.

At New York the seamen are only too easily seduced to the sailors' boarding-houses, where they are kept in a state of dissipation until their wages are spent. In some cases the advance absorbs more than a month's wages, an arrangement made for the special benefit of the boarding-house keepers and their allies.

The consuls refer in terms of reprobation to the unrestrained activity of the crimps in the ports of the United States. The proceedings of the boarding-house keepers at San Francisco at a very recent period are thus described by Consul Booker: 'Vessels of all

Crimping  
in United  
States.

nations are boarded by numbers of boarding-house "runners" before the anchor is down ; and, in times when seamen are scarce, the sailors are almost dragged from the ship, taken to the various houses, and, after a few days of dissipation, the victims are shipped with two or three months' advance wages. An occasional prosecution is successfully carried out, but the harbour police force is too small to be effective. The temptation to desert at this port is probably greater than in any other, the average wages paid for seamen shipping on foreign voyages being 5*l.* a month ; added to this is the fact that seamen deserting here cannot be arrested, in the absence of a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, and any state or municipal law on the subject.' This consul, in his report for 1881, states that the desertions amounted to 32½ per cent., excluding officers, or 29 per cent. including officers, on the total number of British crews. During the salmon-fishing season a bonus of 20 to 30 dollars per man had to be paid to the boarding-house keepers. In the Columbia River the desertions reached 35 per cent. on the total crews.

At New Orleans the consul refers to the 'wholesale desertion' of crews. In 1881 the advance notes were raised to 30 dollars on sailing ships, and 20 dollars on steamers. It is the practice for the crimp runners to board vessels on arrival, and literally 'take the crews' out of them. This is done quite openly ; in fact, the consul cites a case in which a runner informed him that a man who was brought forward to sign articles for a new voyage was a deserter who had been taken by him from another vessel. The consul points out that the hardship of all this 'weighs solely on British ships. Those under the Austrian, Danish, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Swedish, &c., flags can retain their deserters under consular conventions.' At Galveston matters are equally bad. The consul there states that seamen are induced to desert by crimps, 'who literally sell the men to other vessels at as high a rate as 9*l.* "for the run" of twenty to twenty-five days, pocketing this sum, which is usually paid in advance ; and the seaman has consequently no money to receive on arrival at destination.' At Savannah in 1881 the number of desertions amounted to 38 per cent. on the total number of seamen registered at the consulate. The consul here hints that, in a large majority of colonial vessels, the desertions are connived at by the masters, who profit largely by the transaction.

The most experienced consuls are in favour of a convention, as proposed by Mr. Archibald, 'whereby criminal jurisdiction in all such cases can reciprocally be conceded to British and United States



courts of law, with an alternative provision authorising consuls, on sufficient affidavits, to obtain warrants from courts of law for the apprehension of criminals, and the returning of them for trial to the country to which their ships belong, as well as for compelling the attendance of witnesses. As to agreements for the hiring, service, and discharge of seamen, provision might be made that the law of the nation to which the ship belongs should, in relation thereto, be admitted and received as the rule of decision by the courts in either country. Or, the consuls of the two nations might (as in the case of the convention between France and the United States) be reciprocally vested with power to deal exclusively with disputes between masters and seamen; and be further clothed with authority, by means of process from the local courts, to apprehend and detain deserters, and to return them to their ships.' This proposal is strongly recommended by Sir Edward Thornton in a letter, written in 1874, on British Trade in the United States, in which he advises a Consular Convention, for the prevention of desertion in the United States, as the best remedy for the endless vexations to which shipmasters are subjected from the undue facilities afforded to their crews, in the frivolous and vexatious appeals they make against their owners, to the lower courts of the American ports.

I believe the British Government are at present engaged in negotiations, with a view to check the abuses of crimping in the United States ports. The Committee of the Liverpool shipowners suggested that crimping by a British subject or a British vessel in a foreign port should be made penal.

Arguments  
of Mr. Archibald.

Approved  
by Sir  
Edward  
Thornton.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## WAGES OF SEAMEN.

Board of  
Trade  
tables.

It will be convenient to open a discussion on the wages of seamen, by giving the more important figures from the tables published by the Board of Trade, showing the fluctuations from 1848 to the present time (see p. 123).

The North American and Australian trades have been selected as the most important branches of the shipping business from the port of Liverpool, and on a similar ground the wages are quoted to the East Indies from the port of London.

Lower pay  
in Australia-  
lian trade.

The marked inferiority in the pay in the Australian, as compared with the North American trade, affords a ready explanation of the reasons why a difficulty is experienced in obtaining good crews for ships despatched on long ocean voyages.

Evidence  
as to wages  
collected by  
Commit-  
tees.

For the purpose of tracing back the rates of wages for seamen to a period prior to the commencement of the Board of Trade tables, it will be necessary to refer to the evidence taken in former Parliamentary inquiries. The general rates for seamen in sailing ships in the East Indian trade were given by Mr. Green, in 1848, as 2*l.* a month for able seamen, and from 35*s.* to 25*s.* for ordinary seamen. At the same period much higher wages were being paid in the Baltic trade, where the fixed wages to seamen were 25*s.* a week, the men finding themselves. The fishermen employed in yachts have been paid at precisely the same rate, with clothes in addition, for the last twenty years.

Sudden  
advances  
in wages.

The tables show that the advance of wages is fitful and uncertain, and caused chiefly by any sudden pressure, such as the Crimean war.

Mr. Graves.

The fluctuations in wages were detailed by Mr. Graves in his evidence before Mr. Lindsay's Committee. 'In 1846,' he said, 'I find that the rate was 2*l.* 5*s.* to Australia, India, and the West Coast; in 1847 the same; in 1848 the same; in 1849 the same; and in

*Rates of Wages of Able Seamen in various Trades in the Ports of Liverpool and London from 1848 to 1882.*

		Port of Liverpool		Port of London
		Voyages to North America	Voyages to Australia	Voyages to East Indies and China
1848	.	s. 50	s. 45	s. 40
1850	.	50	45	40
1852	.	50	50	40
1854	.	70	60	60
1856	.	65 to 70	70	60
1858	.	55	45	45
1860	.	60	50	50
1862	.	55 to 70	45 to 50	50
1864	.	75 " 86	50 " 60	50
1866	.	70 " 85	50	50 to 70
1868	.	60 " 70	50	50
1870	Sailing	65	50	50
	Steam	80	55	60 to 65
1871	Sailing	65 to 80	50	50
	Steam	80	55	70
1872	Sailing	70 to 90	55 to 60	60
	Steam	80 " 90	60	70
1873	Sailing	90	60	65
	Steam	90	60	70
1874	Sailing	90	60	65
	Steam	80	60	70
1875	Sailing	90	—	65
	Steam	80	60	70
1876	Sailing	90	—	65
	Steam	60	55	70
1877	Sailing	90	—	65
	Steam	60 to 80	45 to 60	55 to 65
1878	Sailing	80 " 90	50 " 65	70
	Steam	50 " 60	45 " 50	50
1879	Sailing	70 " 80	—	60 to 65
	Steam	50 " 60	50	50
1880	Sailing	70 " 80	—	60 to 65
	Steam	60	55	60
1881	Sailing	80	—	70
	Steam	60	55 to 60	60
1882	Sailing	80 to 90	—	65 to 70
	Steam			

1851 the same. It commenced in 1853 to advance, consequent upon the war and the Australian discoveries; then it went up as high as 5*l.*, and it has since been going back. In 1857 it was 2*l.* 15*s.*, and in 1858 it was 2*l.* 5*s.*; it is now 2*l.* 15*s.* to 3*l.* The year 1858 was a period of depression.

During the first impetuous rush to the gold-fields, seamen were ready to work their passage out to Australia for merely nominal wages. Ships used to take a double crew, paying the men 1*s.* a month, with an agreement that they should be allowed to leave the

Rush to gold-fields.



ship two days after her arrival at the port of destination. In many cases a bonus of 5*l.* was given to induce seamen to complete the return voyage homewards.

Since Crimean war wages stationary.

Mr. Green.

During the Crimean war Mr. Dunbar gave all able seamen in his ships 4*l.* a month. But this advance was not sustained after the close of the war, and until a recent period wages have remained almost stationary. Mr. Green said in 1860:—‘I have been a shipowner now nearly thirty years. I never paid less than 40*s.* a month to able seamen in my life; at the present moment the rate is 2*l.* 10*s.* The week before last it was 2*l.* 5*s.*, but owing to the easterly winds setting in, there is a scarcity of men. In point of fact there is no real difference in seamen’s wages since the time when I first entered the shipping trade.’

Mr. Dunbar.

In evidence before the same Committee Mr. Dunbar gave the rates of wages then current in the different grades as follows:—‘Mates, 8 guineas; second mates, 5 guineas; third mates, 3 guineas; boatswains, 5 guineas; carpenters, 7 guineas; joiners, 2*l.* 10*s.*; stewards, 5 guineas; cuddy servants, 3*l.*; cooks, 5*l.*; cooks’ mates, 2*l.*; butchers, 3*l.*; A.B.’s, 2*l.* 10*s.*; ordinary seamen, 1*l.* 10*s.*’ Mr. Dunbar’s statement as to the former scale of the seamen’s pay was in precise accord with the evidence given by Mr. Green.

Skill and remuneration interdependent.

The supply of skilled nautical labour is governed by the same considerations which influence the supply of the labour market on shore. It is abundant and good in quality where wages are high, and insufficient or inferior where wages are low.

Higher wages in steamers.

Notwithstanding the reduction in the crews, considerable difficulty is sometimes experienced in procuring well-trained seamen to man the sailing ships. But the shipowners themselves have the remedy in their own hands. No difficulty whatever is experienced in procuring seamen for steam vessels—Why? Because the wages of seamen in steamers have been raised to such a point as to attract the best seamen from sailing ships. The wages are as six in steamers to five in sailing ships.

Shipowners are too ready to attribute their difficulty in procuring seamen to the general deterioration of this class. At Liverpool the wages for seamen in the Mediterranean trade in sailing vessels used to be 50*s.*; in steamers, 60*s.*, per month. For sailing ships in the North American trade the wages were 65*s.*; in steamers, 80*s.*, per month. From London the corresponding rates were—to the Mediterranean, in sailing ships, 50*s.* to 55*s.*; in steamers, 60*s.* to 70*s.*; and in the East India and China trade, 50*s.* for sailing ships, and 60*s.* to 65*s.* for steamers.

Mr. Inman repeated an often-told tale when he said, 'A good wage will secure good men. The Inman Company have made it a rule to give no advance note, and to take only married men if they can get them. In their experience this has proved to be an excellent rule. They have never wanted men, and they have retained men in their service for periods of from fifteen to twenty years.' Mr. Inman's opinion was, that 'if men are well treated in the fore-castle, and well paid, the shipowner does not need the assistance of the State in order to enable him to obtain excellent crews.' Mr. Charles MacIver told the Royal Commission that the Cunard Company engaged 43,000 men a year, and that they had no fault to find. Mr. Burns, the senior member of the Cunard Company in Glasgow, shared the opinion of his partner. The opinion of Mr. MacIver and Mr. Burns was confirmed by Mr. Duncan, a shipping master in Glasgow, who said that of late years the best seamen in the port had been taken up by the large steamship companies, who were perfectly satisfied with the men they obtained. The consuls, in their replies to the Circular of the Board of Trade in 1872, were almost unanimous in the opinion that the crews of steam ships gave infinitely less trouble than the crews of sailing ships.

Mr. Inman.  
Mr. MacIver.

Mr. Burns.

Consular  
opinion.

The accommodation in sailing vessels of the smaller class is insufficient and most uncomfortable. The consuls at the ports to which sailing vessels of an inferior class chiefly resort, concur in the view that the seamen in the smaller vessels are badly fed, badly housed, and badly paid.

Inferior accommodation in sailing ships.

As the work is harder, and there are many other circumstances, necessarily incidental to the employment in sailing vessels, which tend to make the service less attractive, especially to married men, the wages, if they had been regulated upon an equitable principle of compensation, ought to have been higher than in steamers. In point of fact, an entirely opposite rule has been observed.

Wages in sailing ships should have been higher.

Mr. Gray stated to the Royal Commission, that 'the reason why they had not better sailors in sailing ships, was not because seamen were worse as a body, but because some particular trades or services would not give sufficient wages to attract the good seamen. Pay at the rate of 2*l.* 15*s.* a month, to go to Australia, with a monotonous diet, had not the attraction to be found in 4*l.* 10*s.* a month for a short voyage across the Atlantic, with a good fresh diet, and the companionship of passengers, and a spell at home after each short voyage.'

Mr. Gray.

In the report prepared by Messrs. Gray and Hamilton, of the Board of Trade, after an official visit to all the principal ports, the

Messrs. Gray and Hamilton.



general condition of the *personnel* of the merchant service is summed up in the following passage:—‘Among British seamen are to be found many as good as ever; but, by a process of natural selection, the good ones have got together and the bad ones have got together. The good seamen prefer ships affording constant employment, and making regular voyages, where they have healthy accommodation, good food, and good wages.’

Sir Bartholomew Sullivan.

Ever since the period when the steam trade began to develop itself in formidable competition with sailing ships, the same marked difference between the wages in the two branches of the merchant service has been observable. Thus we find Sir Bartholomew Sullivan referring in the following terms to the impression, which was already gaining ground in 1859, that our seamen were deteriorating:—‘There is a reason,’ he said, ‘why I think this opinion has got abroad. We have a very large number of steam companies, and very large leading lines of sailing ships, owned by well-known ship-owners and firms. There is no doubt that the men are better treated and better kept in those large employments than in an ordinary merchant ship; there were no such employments a few years ago, compared to the others. They now probably take the best men, and leave the inferior class of men to the smaller class of ships, where we find most of these complaints. I think that that is an explanation of the apparent falling off of our merchant service. It is also stated that the masters and mates have improved; that I believe to be the case, and I cannot believe that if the masters and mates have improved, the men under their employ have become worse, because as a rule I am sure that good masters and mates will make good seamen.’

Sailors become firemen.

As advantages in point of wages attract the best seamen from the sailing ships to the steamers, so, under like inducements, many sailors leave the deck in order to become firemen. This fact alone is enough to prove that no scheme of training will secure a constant supply of good seamen for those branches of our maritime trade in which a serious difficulty exists, unless the owners do something to improve the terms of remuneration, by giving an addition to the present wages, as a reward for good conduct, and by offering to the seamen, so far as circumstances permit, continuous employment.

Continuous employment.

A demoralising influence has been exerted, owing to the introduction at all the large home ports of a separate body of men for loading and unloading the cargoes of ships. A vessel is probably more quickly discharged by the new arrangement. It follows, however, (and this is a result much to be regretted) that the crew, after



spending a few days in port in idleness, are compelled, as soon as their hard earnings are dissipated, to seek fresh engagements in other vessels. These constant dispersions are demoralising, and affect most unfavourably the composition of the crews of merchant vessels. 'When a ship is ready for another voyage the master finds all his old hands scattered, and he starts, as a rule, with a crew, not one of whom, excepting perhaps the steward, he has ever seen before.

'The men come on board in a state of intoxication, but before twenty-four hours have elapsed the captain must distribute them to their different posts. It can scarcely be a subject of surprise that the wrong man is often selected for some important duty, and that the safety of the ship, the crew, and the cargo is thereby endangered.'

Captain Moriarty dwells particularly on this question of continuous service in a letter, addressed to the editor of the *Nautical Magazine*, in November, 1875:—'Some great steam companies keep their people on pay permanently. They have, in consequence, a superior class of men, who are under perfect discipline, discharge being the only punishment. But the majority of shipowners could not afford to keep a crew in a ship in dock, unless they would work as regularly as the stevedores and dock labourers, which at present they are not likely to do.'

Captain  
Moriarty;  
R.N., C.B.

The practice of discharging the whole crew on arrival offers no encouragement to the well-conducted seaman. Men, who have been absent from their homes for months, and have behaved in all respects to the satisfaction of their captain, have established a claim to more generous consideration. A short holiday on full pay is but a just reward for long, faithful, and arduous service. Regular employment, rather than high but uncertain wages, has been generally preferred by working men of all classes.

For the causes of the present alleged deficiency in the supply of good seamen, we must carry our observation back to years gone by. All the seamen at present available were trained to their calling at a time when the scale of pay was much lower than it is at present. When the pay of seamen shall have been sustained at the present ample rates for a sufficient period of time, the owners of sailing ships will doubtless be enabled to procure a better class of seamen.

Recent advance, if sustained, will secure better seamen.

In 1872 the condition of the sailor compared much less favourably with that of the skilled workman on shore than it does at the present time. In 1872 several of the consuls alluded to the difference in the condition of the mariner, and that of the same class on shore, as giving a sufficient explanation of the inferiority in the cha-

Wages formerly lower than on shore.

racter and conduct of the seaman. The following are some extracts from the Blue-book on the subject :—

Consul  
Mark.

Consul E. M. Mark, of Marseilles, expressed his opinion in the following observation :—‘ With regard to our seamen, they are very badly paid in comparison with the rates of wages now gained ashore in almost every civilised country in the world ; and it is scarcely to be expected that any man, who has any respect for himself, will now go to sea for 2*l.* 10*s.* a month, with frequently infamous food on board and a rough skipper and mate over him. The scale of seamen’s wages should be revised forthwith if shipowners wish to hold their ground successfully. Fortunately there is a large supply forthcoming of German, Norwegian, and Swedish seamen, who now, in fact, form one-third of our crews ; good, orderly fellows, and who at present are tolerably content with 2*l.* 10*s.* a month and rough fare. But many of these, who have already made a few voyages out to America, Australia, and China, are also becoming demoralised.’

Vice-  
Consul  
Ward,  
Memel.

Vice-Consul William Ward, of Memel, writes :—‘ The general condition of British seamen who have come under my notice is not satisfactory. One chief cause of the deterioration is the fact that so many fresh fields of employment have grown up of late years, in which able-bodied and intelligent men generally find a better living than at sea, where the pay is mostly low, the accommodation and provisions are of an indifferent character, and the treatment by their superiors is sometimes brutal and cruel.’

Vice-  
Consul  
Murray,  
Portland.

Vice-Consul Murray, of Portland, writes :—‘ The American shipmasters here all declare that the character and class of their seamen have very much deteriorated, and that no man who can make a living by any other pursuit will go to sea.’

Adam  
Smith.

At a much earlier epoch the occupation of the sailor compared perhaps even more disadvantageously with any description of skilled labour on shore. Adam Smith thus refers to the seaman’s wages :—‘ In time of peace, and in the merchant service, the London price is from a guinea to about seven-and-twenty shillings the calendar month. A common labourer in London, at the rate of nine or ten shillings a week, may earn in the calendar month from 40*s.* to 45*s.* The sailor, indeed, over and above his pay, is provided with provisions. Their value, however, may not perhaps always exceed the difference between his pay and that of the common labourer ; and though it sometimes should, the excess will not be clear gain to the sailor, because he cannot share it with his wife and family, whom he must maintain out of his wages at home.’

The disadvantages of the sailor’s condition are such that it would

have been impossible to obtain men at such low wages, unless the imaginations of boys had been interested by the prospect of distant travel, and by a desire for constant change of scene. Adam Smith has truly said that 'the dangers and hair-breadth escapes of a life of adventure, instead of disheartening young people, seem frequently to recommend a trade with them.' The passion for the sea generally subsides in later life. Mr. Lindsay told the Manning Commission that 'every seaman, after a continuous service at sea, looks forward with pleasure to that which he calls "a spell on shore." When young and active, and more especially while he remains unmarried, the sea has many more charms for him than the land; but after ten years' service afloat, as a general rule, the sailor desires to pass a few years on shore.'

His observations were confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Lamport before the Committee of 1860 :—

'We can only find a certain portion of the population who are willing to go to sea. A seafaring life is not a desirable life. I never knew a sailor thirty years of age who was not anxious to leave the sea if he could find anything to do on shore.'

One other consideration, suggested by Adam Smith, must be taken into view. 'The lottery of the sea,' he said, 'is not altogether so disadvantageous as that of the army. The son of a creditable labourer or artificer may frequently go to sea with his father's consent; but if he enlists as a soldier, it is always without it. Other people see some chance of his making something by the one trade; nobody but himself sees any of his making anything by the other.'

These remarks are confirmed in a remarkable degree by the fact that among our largest and most successful shipowners there are not a few, who began their career as officers in the merchant service, or even as seamen before the mast. At first sight, no condition in life would seem to afford less opportunity for the accumulation of a large capital than that of the common seaman. His wages have until lately been low, and the majority of his class are reckless. Not a few, notwithstanding, of our wealthiest shipowners have crept through the hawse-pipe to the quarter-deck, and thence to the counting-house. To whatever cause their success can be traced, whether to fortune, personal merit, or special opportunities, it is an encouraging feature that these instances of individual good-fortune are not rare among men who have begun life as sailors.

While, however, every allowance is to be made for these contingencies, it will be generally recognised that Messrs. Gray and Hamilton gave expression to a sound opinion when they said, 'In the

A Sailor's  
prospect of  
advance-  
ment.

General  
conclu-  
sions.



Messrs.  
Gray and  
Hamilton.

general question of nursing or encouraging the merchant service, any steps taken by payment out of the Mercantile Marine Fund, or by the nation, if effectual in increasing the number of able seamen, will ultimately be of little avail if and so long as the wages of skilled workmen and labourers on shore remain so much higher than the wages of seamen.'

Mr. Gray.

Mr. Gray pursued a similar line of argument when examined by the Duke of Somerset. 'It has,' he said, 'appeared to the Department that if a shipowner does not think it worth his while to pay sufficient wages to attract into the service a superior class of skilled labour, there is no reason why the State should come in and pay part of those wages, or do anything to interfere with the labour market, when the shipowner does not choose to move in that direction himself. Some of our best sailors go into warehouses on shore, where, instead of getting 2*l.* 15*s.* a month, which they would earn at sea, they get 40*s.* a week. How are you to say to those men, You shall not be allowed to earn 40*s.* a week on shore, but you shall earn 2*l.* 15*s.* a month afloat?'

The philanthropic advocates of an extension of the training system must not forget that competition determines the value of the seaman's labour, and that an artificial nursery for seamen may ultimately prove fatal to the cause they have at heart, if it has the effect of lowering the remuneration of the seamen, by largely adding to their numbers.

Privations  
of a sea  
life.

In comparing the condition of the sailor with that of other workmen, there are elements besides the mere rate of wages which must be taken into view. The sailor in the long foreign trade is so entirely cut off from his home that some shipowners think he has no right to marry. It has been said that a sailor must live in exile; 'that it is against all moral and social principle that you should hold out any inducement to him to take upon himself a position, the duties of which he must be absolutely incapable of properly fulfilling.'

Bad as-  
sociations.

Again, the associations of the fore-castle in a ship manned by a bad crew are such as to repel decent men from following the employment. A correspondent of the *Shipping Gazette*, under the anonymous signature of 'A Lieutenant of the Royal Naval Reserve,' writes thus:—'I am constrained to picture life in a merchant ship's fore-castle of the present day, so that it may be seen how careful we should be in dealing with the young. They will hear the vilest wishes, combined with oaths, day by day during the time of their apprenticeship; and if you expect other than the very worst of

society, I tell you it is not to be had. Young men supposed to be irreclaimable are, as a last resource, sent to sea. The captain in charge may in some measure by his advice and example counteract the evil influences, but he may himself be a stranger to those Christian feelings that make the true man and the gentleman.'

It has already been said that the wages of seamen have risen rapidly of late. In 1848 the average rate per month was 48s. ; in 1864, 56s. ; in 1874, 71s., a month. The average rate rose 10s. from 1846 to 1864, and 14s. during the ten years from 1867 to 1877. Taking into consideration the degree of skill required, the seamen are now well off. Pay at the rate of 50*l.* a year is a good remuneration in an occupation requiring nothing more than common intelligence, combined with practical experience, and where the workman is found in addition. The wages of seamen have advanced as much as 50 per cent. within the space of a single generation. This is a great progress, but the point of departure was a bare subsistence wage.

Present  
wages not  
inadequate.

'As regards the seaman's wages, it is interesting,' says Mr. Farrer, 'to learn whether they have increased in the same proportion as in other employments. This is not easy to do, because we have no accurate return of the wages of other labourers, and because, in the official returns of seamen's wages presented annually by the Board of Trade to Parliament, no distinction is made between the wages paid in sailing ships and those paid in steam ships before the year 1869. We have, however, obtained from some large firms the rates of wages paid, in London and in the country, to mechanics and labourers in the building and engineering trades, from which it appears that the wages of London mechanics, which were 30s. a week in 1849-50, increased to 34s. a week in 1860-61, or 13·3 per cent., and to 38s. 10*d.* a week in 1873-75, or 29·4 per cent.; that the wages of country mechanics, which were 24s. 2*d.* in 1849-50, had increased in 1860-61 to 26s. 1*d.*, or 7·9 per cent.; and in 1873-75 to 32s. 4*d.*, or 33·8 per cent. The wages of London labourers in these trades, which, in 1849-50, were 18s., had increased in 1860-61 to 20s., or 11·1 per cent., and in 1873-75 to 25s. 1*d.*, or 39·4 per cent.; and the wages of country labourers, which in 1848-50 were 15s. 5*d.*, had increased in 1860-61 to 16s., or 3·8 per cent., and in 1873-75 to 19s. 9*d.*, or 28·1 per cent.

'On the other hand, the wages of seamen, which in 1849-50 were 45s. 9*d.* per month, had risen in 1860-61 to 53s. 6*d.*, or 17 per cent.; and in 1873-75—taking the average of steamers and sailing vessels—to 73s., or 59·6 per cent. The rise in steamers alone in

this latter period was to 77*s.* 5*d.*, or 69·2 per cent.; and in sailing ships to 69*s.* 7*d.*, or 52·1 per cent.'

According to these figures, which, however, cannot be taken as completely accurate or as exhaustive, the wages of seamen have increased in a larger proportion than the wages of mechanics or labourers; and, if the supply of seamen has fallen off more in proportion than the supply of other workmen, this proportionately greater falling off cannot be attributed to a disproportionate increase of pay.

Severe  
competi-  
tion in  
shipping.

While it has been necessary to state frankly all the facts bearing on the condition of the seamen, and to allude to the competition with other employers, who are prepared to pay their servants on a more liberal scale than the shipowner has until lately consented to adopt, I wish, with Mr. Gray, to guard myself against being misinterpreted.

Mr. Gray.

'I do not mean,' he said, 'that shipowners in certain trades give lower wages than the service rendered requires. What I mean is, that as the wages in the mercantile sea service are, as a rule, all over the world, lower than the wages of skilled mechanics and others in the mercantile land service, there is, as regards wages, a positive inducement for men to engage in the mercantile land service rather than the mercantile sea service in any country.'

The profits of British shipowners have been brought by international competition, and still more by ruinous and often reckless competition among themselves, to a point which not unfrequently gives a miserable return upon the capital invested.

Low wages  
and cheap  
production  
not syno-  
nymous  
terms.

Wages in the British merchant service are higher than in the mercantile marine of any other country, excepting the United States. As a general rule, foreign crews accept lower wages than those paid to British seamen. Under such conditions we should have been driven from the sea long ago, unless we had had superior resources in the materials for building iron ships and steamers, and, still more, in the capital necessary to build, equip, and send them to sea. It does not follow that work is executed cheaply because wages are low. Wages in the German ports are moderate, because the supply of German artisans in almost every branch of trade exceeds the demand. The ordinary wages of unskilled labourers in 1872 are given by Consul White as from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* a day; but it has been found by English employers that, on the whole, unskilled labour is not cheaper than it is in Great Britain.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE ADVANCE NOTE.

ALTHOUGH the advance note has been abolished by the Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act of 1880, a brief sketch of the arguments used for and against its retention may still possess some interest. The abolition raised considerable opposition among shipowners. The objection came chiefly from the owners of sailing ships, the majority of steamship owners having previously abandoned this reprehensible system. It was retained in sailing ships chiefly as a bounty to induce sailors to accept lower wages.

Advances  
tended to  
keep down  
wages.

Shipowners generally may decline to endorse this statement. It is contradicted, for example, in the following extract from an interesting letter received from Messrs. George Smith and Sons, of Glasgow:—‘So far as our experience goes, we are not aware of the advance note having been given in order to induce men to engage at lower wages, nor do we give these notes, except when they are asked for by the men themselves. Indeed, our wish is that they could be dispensed with; but, at the same time, we consider it would be unfair to a sailor to ask him to ship for a voyage of eight, ten, or twelve months’ duration, and refuse to give him some money to meet the expense of his outfit for such a voyage.

A contrary  
opinion  
maintained  
by Messrs.  
G. Smith  
and Sons.

‘We admit that these notes are often made use of for other purposes, but it is surely unjust to make all sailors suffer because some do wrong. The advance note, we maintain, is right. It is the abuse of it that is wrong. And if our Legislature wish to strike at the root of the drunkenness and debauchery of our sailors, they should take the temptation out of their way by closing the dram-shops and houses of ill-fame. These are the curses of our country, and when they are rooted out there will be less need to make laws either for sailors or for men on shore. That most of the witnesses examined before the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships were in favour of abolishing the advance note does not at all surprise us; as owners of ships only hear of the drunkenness of crews when

joining their ships, and forget altogether the far greater amount of drunkenness and debauchery which takes place when they are paid off, and which is likely to be increased the more money the men have to spend.'

Higher  
wages  
where no  
advance  
given.  
Mr.  
Rankin.

There cannot be a doubt, however, that where the advance note was refused, it was found necessary to give higher wages.

Mr. Rankin stated to the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships that 'his firm had, regardless of cost, tried to get their seamen without any advance. By so doing, they thought they got a class of men superior to those who were deeply in debt. At the same time, it involved their giving much higher wages. They were paying 4*l.* 10*s.* a month, and if they gave the men a full month's advance it might be 1*l.* less.'

Comman-  
der Bevis.  
R.N., 1852.

Commander Bevis, who was for many years in charge of the recruiting for the Navy at Liverpool, in his report to the Manning Committee of 1852 on the condition of the merchant service, quoted some figures which show that the rate of wages was higher a quarter of a century ago in cases where no advance was given. 'There is,' he wrote, 'so much American trade here that seamen care but little as to character or register-ticket; if driven, they can get an American ship without either. Their first demand is money; this they obtain by an advance note, which is given to the boarding-house keeper, who deducts his exorbitant bill from the amount, and gives the poor man a few shillings as the balance. Wages of merchant ships at present are as follows:—

'To China.—2*l.* 5*s.*, one month's advance; or 2*l.* and two months' advance.

'East Indies.—The same.

'Australia.—3*l.* to 3*l.* 10*s.*

'Coast of Africa.—2*l.* 5*s.*, two months' advance.

'Cape of Good Hope and Pacific.—2*l.* 5*s.*, one month's advance.

'North America.—3*l.*, no advance; or 2*l.* 10*s.*, and one month's advance.

'West Indies and Mediterranean.—2*l.* 5*s.*, and one month's advance.

'The wages to Australia and the West Coast vary very much; the "Great Britain," with forty A.B.'s, gives 4*l.* 10*s.*'

It is impossible to resist the conclusion that, with many ship-owners, their attachment to the system of the advance note arose from a well-founded apprehension that some increase in the rate of wages would follow upon the abolition of advances. That, however, is not a consequence which I, for one, should deplore.

The public is resolved to do justice to the sailor, and none will be found to object to bear their share of the burden of increased wages, a burden which is practically unfelt, when distributed over the whole of the community which gives employment to shipping.

I am personally interested in the success of our merchant shipping, and am one of those who have suffered by the past depression in this branch of commercial enterprise. But I cannot attribute such depression to the exorbitant scale of wages paid to the seamen. On the contrary, upon calm reflection, it will be seen how insignificant is the loss from an increased rate of pay, when compared with the difficulties which shipowners have brought upon themselves by ruinous competition, and by the excessive increase in the tonnage built.

Depression of shipping trade not caused by high wages.

It is not intended to cast any reflection on those shipowners who wished to retain the advance note. Among them may be found some of the most experienced and honourable members of the mercantile community. Here I would once more refer to Mr. George Smith, of Glasgow, both because of the high reputation of his firm for the excellent and liberal administration of their business, and because, through the medium of a temperate and lucid statement with which he favoured me in 1874, I obtained a full and fair explanation of the objections which may be taken to the change then proposed in the method of paying seamen.

Letter of Mr. Smith to Mr. W. S. Lindsay.

The Committee of Liverpool Shipowners, appointed to inquire into the alleged deterioration of seamen, urged the abolition of advance notes, without hesitation, in their original report, although their later reports indicate a change of view on this subject. We shall return hereafter to their report.

Committee of Liverpool Shipowners.

In their second Report, issued in 1874, the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships admitted that difficulties might at first be experienced; but they insisted not the less firmly on the discontinuance of the system of advance notes.

Royal Commission, 1874.

'There will,' they say, 'be some inconvenience felt at first from the abolition of the existing system, and there will perhaps be considerable opposition to the change in the ports and amongst the lodging-house keepers, who profit by the advance note.'

'We feel, however, convinced that unless this mischievous mode of payment is discontinued, the seamen will never be raised from their servile dependence on crimps, and taught to rely on their own industry and intelligence.'

To the shipowner there seemed likely to be little inconvenience



from the proposed alteration in the law; but for the sailor a change in the mode of paying his wages might reasonably be supposed to be more serious. Public opinion would condemn arbitrary restrictions on the freedom of contract of a large body of working men. It is important, therefore, that the question should be examined in all its bearings, and that the practical effect of the abolition of the advance note should be properly understood.

What is an  
advance  
note?

What, then, is an advance note? This elementary question can be most completely answered by an extract from the memorandum prepared by Mr. O'Dowd for the information of the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships:—

‘The shipowners at the several ports of the United Kingdom have felt it necessary to give seamen engaged for their ships an advance for every voyage of not less than one month’s wage, to enable them to pay debts contracted for board and lodging ashore while waiting employment, and for the purchase of clothes and outfit requisite for the voyage. This is done, not by a money payment, but by an advance note in the following terms, delivered to the seamen generally by the shipping master at the port at the time the seamen sign the ship’s articles in the presence of that officer:—

“Glasgow, July 6, 1873.

“Ten days after the departure of the ship — from the last port or place in the River or Firth of Clyde, in which from any cause she may be before finally leaving for the voyage for which this note is issued, pay to the order of (*seaman’s name*) the sum of 3*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, provided the said seaman sails in and continues in the said vessel and duly earns his wages, being advance of wages according to agreement.

“(Signed) ROBERT DOUGLAS, Master.

“To Messrs. Henderson and Co.,  
Hope Street, Glasgow.”

‘The seaman endorses and gets this note discounted, sometimes by the keeper of the boarding-house, at other times by the clothier or dealer who supplies the goods, the discounters deducting 2*s.* per pound discount, and the amount due to himself for board and clothes.’

This system of advance notes was strongly condemned in the Report of the Commission. It was proved by the testimony of many witnesses that, while wages are paid in advance to seamen, presumably in order to enable them to provide the necessary outfit

for a long voyage, in practice the advance note is rarely used for this purpose.

Colonel Hill, the President of the Chamber of Commerce at Col. Hill. Bristol, expressed the strongest opinions on the subject. He informed the Commission that, at the port which he represented, nine-tenths of the desertions were attributable to the advance note. While the object of the advance was to enable a sailor to provide himself with an outfit for a long voyage, he had frequently seen them going on board the ships belonging to his firm in such a destitute condition that the police would have been justified in apprehending them for passing through the streets insufficiently clad. His captains had often told him that, in bad weather, they have given their own clothes to the man at the wheel, to enable him to remain at his post. Captains, as a private speculation of their own, were obliged to take out a supply of clothing. Considering that the advance note was so rarely used for a legitimate object, Colonel Hill was of opinion that little inconvenience and much good would follow from its abolition.

I would propose to meet the difficulty by compelling all masters of ships to carry a stock of clothes for sale to the seamen, at prices approved by the Board of Trade.

Outfits to be provided from slop-chests at sea.

Precisely similar statements were made by the Consuls at foreign ports. Their disinterestedness in such a matter cannot be doubted; and the following reply of Mr. E. A. Grattan, H.B.M. Consul at Antwerp, to the Board of Trade Circular of 1869, may be taken as a fair example of the consular opinion generally:—

Half-pay.

‘The necessity in which the seaman is supposed to be placed of procuring an outfit previous to going to sea, forms the ostensible ground of the system of advance notes, but it is very clear to those whose duties have brought them in contact with seafaring men, that the advance he receives does not practically lead to the attainment of the object in view, it being a very general remark that a large proportion of the sailors employed in the mercantile marine are very scantily provided, and often almost entirely destitute of proper clothing. It is distressing to think of the sufferings to which seamen are exposed during long voyages from this cause, which not only affects the personal well-being and comfort of the men, but reacts upon the general efficiency of the crew by disabling seamen from the proper discharge of their duties. It has been suggested as a means of diminishing or mitigating this evil, that it should be incumbent on the owners of every vessel about to proceed to sea to furnish the ship with a stock of clothing, to be supplied, under

Consul Grattan, Antwerp.

suitable regulations, by the master to the crew as they might wish or require it. The necessity of purchasing clothes on shore before wages have been earned would thus be obviated. To a certain extent, no doubt, the practice of furnishing clothing to seamen already exists on board merchant ships; but in order to render the system effectual, and thus strike at the root of the principle of advance notes, it would be necessary that all supplies of this description should be furnished according to a regulated scale of prices, to be fixed by a competent authority, so as to prevent overcharge to the seamen, and thus imperil the success of the experiment. The system under which clothing and other articles are at present furnished to seamen on board merchant ships being voluntary and subject to no control, it often happens that a very arbitrary rate of charges is established, and no doubt a real imposition practised upon seamen who in case of need may have recourse to the ship's chest for their supplies.'

Advance  
notes  
encouraged  
improvi-  
dence.

The advance note was not only a temptation to dissipation, but a direct encouragement to improvident habits on the part of sailors. In the debate on the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, Mr. Lindsay said: 'Sailors will not become more provident and thoughtful, until they find that they cannot get a supply of money, to fit them out for their next voyage, if they waste what they have received from the last. They will then be forced to learn habits of economy, and to retain from each voyage at least as much as would be required to fit them out for another.'

Many artisans, and even unskilled labourers, to whom it is a hard struggle to make any provision for the future out of their scanty earnings, have to travel through the country, at their own expense, in search of employment. The railway navy does not command the wages of a skilled workman. He is not pre-eminently distinguished for prudence and forethought. The nature of his occupation demands a liberal diet. But, with all these difficulties, whether arising from defects of character, or the force of circumstances, the navy does make provision for intervals of enforced idleness, and for the expenses of his periodical migration from one railway contract to another.

By comparison with most other workmen, the seaman enjoys exceptional advantages. He need not travel from port to port in search of employment. He is engaged almost invariably in the same port and at the same shipping office at which he was paid off from his last voyage.

It will be seen from the Report and the evidence taken by the



Duke of Somerset's Commission that the advance note has been condemned by many most experienced authorities. Mr. O'Dowd said that, of all evils connected with the merchant service, the very worst were the advance notes. 'They have,' he adds, 'a most demoralising effect upon the seamen. They send drunken crews to sea and bring seamen into very bad society; whereas, if a sailor were taught the value of character, he would either save or try to get credit from his owner or his master. I regard the advance note as a dreadful evil. It is the foe of providence, the promoter of vice, and the main cause why so many ships go to sea with crews drunken and, at the commencement of the voyage, utterly incapable.'

Mr.  
O'Dowd.

The present officers of the Board of Trade have been perfectly consistent in the view they have taken of the advance-note system. Whenever the question has been raised, they have condemned it. In 1860 Mr. Farrer told the Merchant Shipping Committee that drunkenness among the sailors of this country had been attributed in part, and with great justice, to the advance notes. 'It would,' he says, 'be desirable that they should be discouraged and diminished, but it would be a strong thing to say that the shipowner and the seaman should not make that contract. There was an attempt made in 1850 to amend the system by legalising advance notes and giving a summary remedy to recover upon them where the seaman performed his part of the agreement. That was found not to answer, and those clauses were altogether struck out of the Act of 1854, so that the thing now stands purely as a contract between the shipowner and the seaman, and I believe that there is no practical remedy upon the note.'

Mr. Farrer,  
1860.

In answer to the inquiries of Mr. Liddell, Mr. Farrer, upon the same occasion, referred to the exorbitant rates of interest charged by the crimps who discounted the notes. He did not suppose that the sailor got half of the advance. The crimp took the risk of getting his money from the shipowner, and of course he deducted in proportion from what he gave to the sailor. The system was full of evil. There could be no doubt that to pay a man beforehand for work which he might or might not do, and especially to pay him when he did not get one-half of what his employer was to pay, was a very bad system; but to interfere by law with the freedom of contract, under which it was done, was a very difficult thing.

In 1873, in giving evidence before the Royal Commission, on the part of the Board of Trade, Mr. Gray expressed opinions identically the same as those which had been given in 1860 by Mr. Farrer. He said:--'The advance note is a very great evil. While I was in

Mr. Gray.

Liverpool recently, a deputation representing 2,400 seamen waited on me to urge its abolition.'

Liverpool  
Committee.

The system was condemned by the Liverpool Committee of Inquiry into the Condition of our Merchant Seamen, both in their preliminary Report in 1870 and in their latest Report in 1874.

In their original Report the Committee quoted, with full approval, certain observations made by a well-known shipowner of the port of Liverpool. 'We think,' they said, 'the advance note is one great cause of the deterioration of our seamen; without it the crimp's occupation would be gone; there would be no inducement for him to get worthless scamps to sign articles. He now ships these men for the advance notes alone, and the man gets little or no benefit from it. To the sailor by profession the want of an advance note would be no hardship: he would be free from the competition of these worthless fellows. Without the advance note a better average of men would be kept up, and the objections now existing with the parents of decent boys, who have a taste for the sea, against their entering that profession, would be removed, or at any rate modified.'

The Committee admitted that there might be cases where the abolition of advance notes would press hardly, as, for example, in the case of poor shipwrecked seamen. For such cases, however, it could not be doubted that a remedy would be provided; and the hardships that might possibly occur in these rare instances would be as nothing, when compared with the great good that would certainly be obtained by making the advance note illegal.

In a letter to the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce* in September 1874, Mr. Callaghan, treasurer of the Seamen's Protective Society, of Liverpool, numbering 3,000 able seamen, including masters and officers, thus expresses the views of the important body on whose behalf he wrote:—

'It is simply ridiculous to say the advance note system is entirely under the sailor's own control—certainly there are many things under the sailor's own control, and which require controlling—if they had the same opportunities that people on shore have of combining throughout the empire for their mutual benefit and protection. But while an advance is given, the sailor looks for and expects it; consequently he is more careless when paid off, and runs into debt, depending upon the advance to clear him out for sea again. The greater part of the advance being spent foolishly, when he gets to sea he is discontented until the "dead horse" is worked out. How often is it the case when the wages are, say 3*l.* per month, and one

month's advance, Jack is offered 2*l.* 15*s.* per month and two months' advance as a bait to catch him for 5*s.* a month less than the regular wages? Jack takes the bait, the money soon goes, he is discontented the whole passage out, and makes up his mind to desert the first suitable opportunity. But let us do away with the advance and the sailor will soon learn to be more provident when paid off; he will be more independent, he will be able to pay his debts in cash, we shall have less drunkenness upon joining ship, less desertions in foreign ports, and in a short time it will be better for all parties concerned.'

It was contended that, in the event of advance notes being abolished, an almost insuperable difficulty would be experienced in manning ships. Under the conditions imposed by the law, the crimp could not cash the advance note, on which he had advanced a more or less considerable sum to the seaman, unless the latter actually sailed in the vessel for which he had shipped. The crimp, therefore, took care that his victim performed this part of the contract; and, to prevent his escape at the last moment, he was often kept in a state of helpless intoxication.

Crimps would not be interested in seeing sailors on board.

It was not probable that such a consideration would have great weight with the Legislature; but, even from that point of view, it might have been suggested that, if advance notes were abolished, the boarding-house keeper would give no credit, and that thus the sailor, as soon as his past earnings were exhausted, would be obliged to go to sea.

The only people who derived any substantial benefit from the advance note were the crimps, who discounted the notes at extortionate rates. The sailor, on landing from a long voyage, without home or friends, surrendered himself, a too ready victim, into the hands of these harpies, whose corrupting influence upon our seamen is one of the dark blots in our civilisation. Those whose occupation takes them frequently to the vicinity of the docks are familiar with the painful spectacle of a ship, just returned home from India, China, or the Antipodes, surrounded, even before she has been moored to the quay, by a band of jackals, ready to pounce upon the seamen as they come ashore, and to lead them away to some miserable haunt, where the hard earnings of many months are consumed in a few days of vicious indulgence, which reduce the hardy seaman to a miserable wreck, worn out with debauchery, and utterly penniless.

In America the evils of the advance note system are as clearly appreciated, and as strongly condemned, as they were in our own country. The unhappy state of the seamen of the port of New York has been

Advance notes in New York.



described in an able report by Mr. J. M. Woodworth, M.D., Supervising Surgeon, United States Marine Hospital Service, and Mr. Heber Smith, M.D., Surgeon, United States Hospital Service, New York City. The section of the report prepared by Dr. Smith is entitled, 'The Sailor and the Service at the Port of New York.' The following extracts prove that in America the seafaring class exhibit the same vices, and that their faults proceed from the same baneful influences, which are unhappily at work in the English ports:—

'But let us suppose the sailor returns with the runner to his old boarding-house. What kind of a place is prepared for his reception? Few that have not had actual experience would credit a faithful description of the vile dens. Situated in the very worst parts of the city, on such streets as Baxter, Water, and Cherry, in old dilapidated houses, reeking with filth and overrun with vermin, the sailor is shown to a bunk in a room that has as many double, and in some cases treble, tiers as it will hold, and without the sign of a convenience for the ordinary necessities of life; and that is his lodging-place. In the saloon, or living room of the house, he is surrounded by a crowd of creatures, male and female, in various stages of intoxication; and can it be thought strange if, under such circumstances, he immediately proceeds to get as drunk as his associates? How can he escape? Each new comer is expected to contribute to the hilarity of the crowd, and he would be forthwith thrashed and then pitched into the street if he failed to meet such expectations. And this is his home.

'But the curse of the advance wages system does not end with the demoralisation, the drunkenness and debauchery, and consequent evils to moral and physical health wrought in the boarding-house. As it seizes upon him the moment the sailor sets foot on shore, so it follows him until he is again afloat, and the world is sick of the details of the methods of shipping crews, and of the cruelties practised upon them at sea.

'What is the remedy for this state of affairs? Can these evils, which are ruining our mercantile marine; which, by destroying the efficiency of the sailor, are not the least important factors in the production of avoidable shipwreck and disaster; and which are more potent than all else in filling our hospitals—can they be removed? And, if so, how?

'There has been an attempt to do so by the framers of the Shipping Act, by placing certain restrictions on the payment of advance wages (sections 17-19). But the restrictions are easily evaded, and have

done little or no good. The disease is too serious and too deep-rooted to be overcome by half-way measures—only the most heroic treatment will avail. The testimony of all who have studied the subject practically is to the effect that there can be no improvement in the condition of the sailor until the payment of wages in advance is absolutely and effectually prohibited. The only argument in favour of the system which is seriously urged is that, from the improvident habits of the sailor, it is necessary to furnish him with the means to buy his “kit” before he can go abroad for any ordinary voyage. This is hardly worth a moment’s consideration. The steward, sail-maker, carpenter, and other petty officers, the firemen, coal-heavers, and all others employed in the engine-rooms of steamers rarely, if ever, receive an advance, while their “kits” generally cost much more than those of the ordinary seaman.

“The General Government only can cope with the difficulty. It is worse than useless, in face of the history of the past, to look for any relief from State legislation, or from private effort.”

Coming from such a high official source, the statements of Dr. Smith are worthy of careful consideration, and, besides, they cast, perhaps, a very just reflection upon the Seamen’s Friend Society, for even this body of Christian philanthropists do not seem to have taken the temporal comfort of the sailor into that consideration which we should have expected of them.

‘We agree with Dr. C. Henry King, Physician-in-Chief of the Seamen’s Retreat, who, in his last Report, says:—“In the last annual report, occasion was taken to allude in brief to some of the evils resulting from the promiscuous manner in which crews were shipped. Another year has added further evidence, if any were wanting, as to the fact that all sailors should be physically examined before rating.”

‘The official investigation respecting the loss of the “Atlantic,” of the White Star Line, brought out the testimony of her commander, “that ten sound men out of forty is an unusually high percentage.” This is a startling assertion, and one which demands immediate attention; and it is a matter which long since should have attracted the attention of such bodies as the Seamen’s Friend Society. Dr. King goes on to say:—

“How vastly important, then, that the mariner, whose roof is the heavens, whose walls the winds, and whose floor the deck or fathomless sea, and who oftentimes is called, without warning, to battle aloft with the storm, or on the deck, should enter upon his voyage with clothes that would protect his body, save him suffering,

and, perhaps, prevent disease ; and how often is there a total lack of this ? ’

Proposed  
abolition in  
Merchant  
Shipping  
Bill, 1875.  
Opposition  
in House of  
Commons.

In the recommitted Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill, as originally introduced, there was a proposal on the subject of advance notes. It has already been stated that objection had been raised to the abolition of advance notes in English ports. To this opposition, as represented in the House of Commons, the Government surrendered without an attempt at resistance. In the debates in Parliament the advocates of the advance note insisted chiefly on the injustice which would be done to the sailor if he were deprived of the means of procuring an outfit. But this difficulty would have been effectually removed by providing on every ship bound on a long voyage a supply of clothing of approved quality, which it should be the duty of the shipowner to sell to the seamen at prices to be regulated by the Board of Trade. Proper clothing is not less essential than a supply of lemon-juice. If it had been provided that the quality and the price of the stores of clothing supplied to ships should be the subject of Government regulation, the abuses incidental to the system of truck payments would have been effectually excluded from the merchant service.

Finally  
abolished  
by Mer-  
chant Ship-  
ping Act,  
1880.

The advance note was finally abolished on August 1, 1881. Whether for good or for evil, it had previously exerted considerable influence on the relations between shipowners and seamen, and its disappearance has therefore not been altogether unmarked by a certain amount of inconvenience. A further reference to this subject, and to other important alterations made by the Act of 1880 with respect to the payment of seamen's wages, will be found at the end of the present volume.



## CHAPTER XV.

## PENSIONS FOR SEAMEN.

BEFORE entering upon the consideration of a proposal for providing pensions for seamen, it may not be superfluous to remind the reader of the exceptional and inevitable dangers to which men are exposed whose business it is to 'go down to the sea in ships.' Though comparatively few in numbers, there is no class of the Queen's subjects on whose labour the entire community is so dependent. Our seamen are the essential instruments by whom our maritime commerce, unrivalled in its magnitude, is conducted. The people of this country could not live without their aid during peace. In war we look to them to guard the first line of the defences of our island home.

Exceptional hazards of the sea.  
Important services of seamen.

The general policy this country ought to adopt, in relation to all matters affecting its maritime interests, should be guided by the principles laid down by the Manning Committee of 1852. They referred in their Report to the opinion, expressed by the Finance Committee of the House of Commons in 1828, that the establishments of this country should be regulated, not with reference to the unusual circumstances of the late war, and to the probability of being called upon to make a similar exertion, but rather with reference to the policy of depending mainly upon our Navy for protection against foreign invasion, and for the means of attacking our enemies.

Manning Committee, 1852.

'This policy will be admitted to be most congenial to the habits and feelings of our countrymen, who have, for a length of time, been accustomed to look upon our naval power as the right arm of our strength, and the main support of our national weakness.' The Manning Committee expressed their high appreciation of the foregoing observations, and their entire concurrence in the sound policy and great importance of fostering Her Majesty's Navy, as one of the best bulwarks of the empire.

While the scheme for a Pension Fund, which will be proposed in

Argument  
for State  
under-  
taking part  
of responsi-  
bility of  
Pension  
Fund.

Natural  
hesitation  
of lands-  
men on  
nautical  
affairs.

History of  
Pension  
Fund.

Pensions to  
seamen  
abroad.

the following pages, is framed upon the principle that it should be strictly self-supporting, it will probably be acknowledged that, even if some trouble and pecuniary liability is imposed upon the State, our proposal may still be justified, for the sake of securing to the country the deeper attachment and loyalty of her seamen.

In dealing with the affairs of seafaring persons, landsmen not unnaturally distrust their own judgment. They are so seldom brought into contact with seamen, that they are necessarily ignorant of their habits and feelings. Hence it is that, while there exists an almost feverish desire to do all that can be done to protect mariners from every avoidable danger, and to improve their material and social condition, Parliament and the public may yet hesitate to accept philanthropic ideas, of the practical value of which they are not competent to judge. Certain it is that the true welfare of the seaman can be most fully secured, not by arbitrary laws, conceived without reference to their own expressed desires, but by legislation, framed and matured in consultation with themselves.

I now proceed to recite very briefly the history of the former Merchant Seamen's Pension Fund, and to explain the reasons why it failed, and the most recent plans for the revival on a sounder basis of a similar institution.

This subject has been frequently investigated by royal commissions and by parliamentary committees. A special commission was appointed in 1848, under the presidency of Lord Ellenborough, to inquire into the condition of the Merchant Seamen's Fund; and the subject has been incidentally, but most carefully, considered by the Commission on the Manning of the Navy in 1859, by the Parliamentary Committee on Merchant Shipping, and lastly, by the more recent Commission on Unseaworthy Ships.

Each successive report has contained a strong recommendation in favour of the establishment of a Pension Fund. There have, indeed, been no differences of opinion, except as to the necessity of making the contributions compulsory.

For my own part, I am an advocate of the only plan by which the benefits it is so desirable to secure to seamen can be universally enjoyed. As all seamen ought to participate equally in these benefits, so all ought to contribute an equal amount.

The life of the sailor is inevitably precarious and adventurous. No class stands in greater need of provision for sickness and old age; and none is so little able to organise, on a complete and extensive scale, provident clubs or benefit societies. Hence it has been thought necessary, in all the more important maritime countries,

that the Government should undertake the task of organising pension funds, more or less of a self-supporting character, for the benefit of seamen.

In France, as it is stated in Lord Ellenborough's Report, the institution for the relief of invalid seamen embraces equally those of the national and the mercantile marine. Founded by the great Colbert, it has survived all the changes of government from his time to the present day. It is supported by contributions, amounting in no case to less than three per cent. of the pay of all persons engaged in the maritime service, whether ashore or afloat; and its revenue, arising from these contributions exacted by law, from other items of public receipt, and from the interest on funded capital, amounts to more than 300,000*l.* a year. France.

A more detailed report on the pensions granted from the fund administered at the Invalides is contained in a report prepared by Consul Featherstonehaugh for the information of Lord Ellenborough's Commission:— Consul  
Feather-  
stone-  
haugh.  
Details.

'The establishment of the institution of Invalides de la Marine dates from 1673. It was reorganised in 1791, and annexed in 1793 by the Revolutionary Government to the Treasury. From that date its independent existence ceased.

'In the year 9 of the Republic it was reconstituted under the Consular Government; but was again annexed to the Treasury in 1810. In 1816, after the Restoration, it was re-established, and placed under the superintendence of the Ministre de la Marine.

'This establishment is divided into three separate branches:— "La Caisse des Prises," "La Caisse des gens de Mer," and "La Caisse des Invalides," which last alone is charged with the payment of pensions, and relief to mariners of both services.

'The funds appropriated for the disbursements of this Caisse are an endowment from the State, of Rentes Immobilières, bearing five per cent. interest, producing a revenue of 4,500,000 francs; a revenue of 3,400,000 francs, derived from fixed contributions and charges; and an amount included in the annual budget; making altogether a total annual receipt of 7,900,000 francs, applicable to the disbursements of the "Caisse des Invalides," for pensions and relief to naval and commercial mariners without distinction.

'Notwithstanding that Bonaparte confiscated a portion of its capital, it had in 1844 a funded invested sum of 3,798,473*l.* sterling.

'After a certain period of service, regulated and varied from time to time by law and by royal *ordonnance*, every officer and sailor in



Every merchant officer and seaman entitled to a pension.  
District treasurers.

the naval and commercial services is entitled to a pension from the "Caisse des Invalides," a moiety of which is secured to their widows and children, while relief is occasionally given even to their parents.

'Forty district treasurers are appointed in the different French ports, whose duty it is to collect the revenue of the "Caisse des Invalides," to advance to the families of absent sailors a portion of their pay, and to liquidate the payment of all pensions inscribed upon their registers upon a given day.

'As no complaints are urged by those most immediately concerned, it is to be presumed that this institution has been beneficial to the French marine.'

'Conscription maritime.'

Service in the French Navy is compulsory. Every French seaman, between the ages of twenty-five and fifty years, is entered on the State Register; and no man can go up for examination for the grade of mate or master until he has served a year and a day at sea in a man-of-war.

Scale of pensions.

Mariners become entitled to pensions after their names have been borne for twenty-five years on ships' articles, and they have attained the age of fifty. Captains in the foreign trade receive what is called the *demi-solde*, or 580 francs a year, paid quarterly. For this they must have been in command five years out of their twenty-five years of actual service afloat. At the age of sixty, captains receive sixty francs per annum additional. Captains' widows, during their life or widowhood, receive half the pension to which their husbands were entitled, and widows' children up to ten years of age receive three francs a month. Further details as to the pensions granted to seamen before the mast are given in the report of Consul Scott from Bordeaux, also published in the Appendix to the Report of Lord Ellenborough's Commission:—

'Seamen who have seen twenty-five years of mixed service, that is, partly in the Navy and partly in the merchant service, at the age of forty are entitled to a pension or half-pay. This pension or half-pay is regulated in the following manner, according to the law of May 13, 1791:—

'Seamen of the first and second class, that is, receiving in the Navy thirty-six francs and thirty-three francs, a pension of ten francs per month.

'Seamen of the third class, receiving in the Navy twenty-four francs, eight francs per month.

'When these men reach the age of sixty, they are allowed an additional pension of six francs per month.

'The pensions granted to seamen are small, and wholly insuffi-

cient; and the conditions required are so stringent, that very few men succeed in obtaining them. There is no doubt that the Caisse des Invalides de la Marine, with the great resources at its disposal, might easily improve the condition of the meritorious seaman by increasing the scales of pension.'

In the United States a compulsory benefit fund has been established, and at all the principal ports asylums exist for the use of seamen, which are supported by deductions from their wages. The right of admission is secured to the seaman after he has been fifteen years in the American service; and married men can become out-pensioners, receiving a shilling a day for life. The compulsory contribution from the seamen's wages amounts to twenty cents per month. Every worn-out or disabled seaman in America is entitled to maintenance in one of the asylums, established by the various states on the American seaboard. United States.

Similar institutions exist in Holland and Sweden.

The regulations established for providing pensions for seamen in Norway were thus described in a letter, addressed by Consul-General Crowe, of Christiania, to Lord Ellenborough's Commission :— Norway.

'In every seaport town and district in Norway there is an independent charitable institution, established exclusively for the benefit of the seamen, their widows and children, called "Institution for the Support and Relief of Distressed Seamen, their Widows and Children."

'One of the functions of the office of registrar is to superintend the engagement of seamen proceeding on foreign voyages, the law making it obligatory, before any vessel can be cleared out at the Custom House, that the articles of agreement are to be signed in the presence of the registrar, it being the duty of the master, with the whole of his crew, to appear before him for that purpose, when the registrar explains to them the nature of the Seamen's Institution, and gives a printed copy of the rules and regulations to the master, for their information. A *pro rata* contribution from each man's earnings is then generally agreed upon, which, on the completion of the voyage, is paid by the master to the registrar, and by him to the cashier of the institution. Should any seaman be hired who does not belong to the port from which the ship is sailing, the amount of his contribution is remitted to the institution established at the port in which such seaman is registered. On completion of the voyage, it is likewise obligatory on the master to appear with his crew before the registrar, if he proposes to discharge them.

'The principle on which these societies are founded appears to

work well, as the financial *status* of the several institutions is in a flourishing condition.

‘Some years ago there was a general fund for the whole country; but of late years separate institutions for each separate Indroullirings-district (registering districts for seamen) have been found to work more effectually in keeping and attaching the men to their homes, as well as in the largeness of their contributions; the general fund was, therefore, by royal rescript, divided among the different districts in which separate societies were founded. Since then each has become an independent establishment.

‘In the port of Christiania the contributions are considerable; and, although voluntary, it appears to have become a positive rule that the men belonging to the port pay one skilling from every dollar they earn.’

Pension  
Fund in  
England.

Admiral  
Denman.

There was formerly a Merchant Seamen's Fund in England, though it was equally unsatisfactory both in its regulations and its management. The history of the fund was fully told by Captain the Hon. Joseph Denman, in his evidence before the Manning Commission in 1859. It was established by Act of Parliament in 1747, in compliance with a petition from the merchant seamen; and one shilling per month was stopped from each man's wages, in order to form a provision for worn-out and disabled mariners, their widows and orphans. While the State was responsible for the management of the fund, its administration was entrusted to a local committee at each port. No general system was formed, and no effectual audit was provided. Hence arose jobbery, confusion, and eventual bankruptcy. At one port, pensions of 13*l.* were paid; at others, the amount of pension was only 2*l.* or 3*l.*; and again at others, it was as low as 10*s.* It was proved that a widow at Sunderland, aged eighty-four, received 2*s.* a month, while a widow at Liverpool, aged twenty-four, received 14*s.* a month for herself, and 12*s.* for each of her children. Such facts justly created discontent; and, the fund being bankrupt, the Act of 1747 was repealed by the Winding-up Act introduced by Mr. Labouchere in 1851. By that Act the Government undertook to remove the great grievance to seamen of the Merchant Seamen's Fund, by winding it up at the cost of the country. The principle adopted was to take all existing assets; to pay all existing pensions or claims to pensions; and to allow existing contributors to continue their contributions with the prospect of a pension. The amount of future pensions was to be determined by taking the average of then existing pensions, which, besides being frequently withheld from want of funds, differed widely in amount



at the different ports. This process is not yet completed. It has cost the country upwards of 1,000,000*l.*, and will probably cost upwards of 500,000*l.* more, before all claims have been satisfied.

The Act of 1851 left it optional with the seamen to continue their subscriptions. Out of 140,000 men, only 11,000 voluntarily continued to subscribe. They naturally had little faith, from their past experience, in the future care of their interests; and moreover, the pension to be secured to them was but 3*l.* 8*s.* per annum.

Few voluntary subscribers.

The fund was wound up solely because it had become insolvent from bad management, and because the pensions were so small that the seamen justly objected to continue their contributions.

To a Pension Fund on the universal system no objection has ever been taken by those who are practically acquainted with the constitution and the character of seamen. On the contrary, it has been the unanimous and long matured conviction of our most distinguished sea officers, that a Pension Fund must be established for seamen under State control and supported by State aid.

A properly constituted Pension Fund approved by best authorities.

Lord Nelson was very anxious to establish a Pension Fund for men of the Royal Navy. The collection of despatches and letters, edited by Sir Harris Nicholas, contains a plan for manning the Navy, which is an interesting proof of our great naval hero's solicitude for the welfare of the seaman.

Lord Nelson.

'When you calculate,' writes Lord Nelson, 'by figures on the expense of raising seamen, I think it is said 20*l.* per man, and that 42,000 seamen deserted during the late war, the loss in money, in that point alone, amounts to 840,000*l.*; without taking into consideration the greater expense of raising more men, and certainly not so good, as those who have been used to the King's naval service. I shall therefore propose that every seaman who has served faithfully five years in war; and, by his certificates, never been concerned in mutinies, nor deserted, shall receive every New Year's-day, or on the King's birthday, the sum of 2*l.*; and if he serves eight years, shall have 4*l.* 4*s.*, exclusive of any pension for wounds.

'It may appear, at first sight, for the State to pay, an enormous sum; but when it is considered that the average life of a seaman is, from old age, finished at forty-five years, he cannot many years enjoy the annuity.'

One of Lord Nelson's arguments in favour of a Pension Fund for seamen, that the prospect of a good pension would attract men to the Navy, and prevent them from deserting, will be fully appreciated by shipowners who, in our day, suffer much loss and inconvenience from the desertion of seamen in foreign ports.

Comparatively few survivors enjoy pensions.

Again, when Lord Nelson affirms that the sailor generally ceases to be fit for the hard wear and tear of life at sea at the age of forty-five, his opinion is confirmed by the most recent testimony on the subject. Unhappily, statistics tell us that but a small proportion of our seamen would live to enjoy the bounty of the State. In France, the seaman, compelled to serve in the Navy by an inexorable law, becomes eligible for an 'Invalides pension' at the age of fifty, subject to the conditions of his having served for a period of twenty-five years afloat in the national or merchant navy.

'Such is the shortness of life,' says Captain Richard Grivel 'among the seafaring class in France, that only one-fourth of the whole number of the seamen who would be entitled to the pension attain to the qualifying age.'

The experience of the French Government is confirmed by the shipowners of our own country. Mr. Richard Green, when asked whether he could form any estimate of the average age of seamen, replied, 'I think a man would not be taken in a ship after fifty. I should say forty-five is about the age when he begins to fall off, and if he presented himself at that age I do not think he would be taken.'

Sir James Graham.

Sir James Graham, treating the subject from a naval point of view, spoke in emphatic terms of the efficacy of a pension. He told the Manning Commission that it would always be a retaining fee of immense value to the Navy.

Captain Pierce, R.N.

Another most competent witness before the Manning Commission; Captain Pierce, a former superintendent of the London Sailors' Home, in an interesting memorandum, made the following observations: 'Seamen are an exceptional class. They have always been considered so, and always will remain so. What other description of men,' he asked, 'require their agreements for labour and service to be watched over by a public officer? What other men require the assistance of a public officer to see that their accounts are correct and that their wages are duly paid? And this arises from their habits, their education, and the peculiar duties these valuable men are called upon to perform. From youth to manhood they are exposed to temptations and dangers by sea and land, which surround no other class of Her Majesty's subjects; and they therefore require, more than others, the protecting arm of a kind and beneficent Government, to do for them what they will not and cannot do for themselves.'

Captain Brown, R.N.

Captain Brown, who held the office of Registrar-General of Seamen at the period of Lord Ellenborough's inquiry, supported the

same proposal with equal earnestness and force. 'I think,' he said, 'that if any other class of men of the like condition were employed and paid after the manner of seamen, subjected during service to like restraints and privations, and suddenly set free, far from home, amongst strangers, surrounded by the same evil influence and temptations, it would become expedient to apply similar regulations to protect them.'

'But it will be a standing reproach, a reproach which does not apply to any other nation, and which will assuredly arouse public indignation, for this country to abandon its worn-out seamen to destitution and want, when no longer able to serve the State, after holding them liable to this obligation by law so long as they were able to work.'

It will be admitted that the individuals whose strong recommendations we have quoted, are men of high authority on this subject, and their opinions are abundantly confirmed by those reports of the Committees of Parliament and Royal Commissions, which represent the collective decisions of statesmen and practical men, who have studied this question with great care, and in a spirit of absolute impartiality.

A letter was addressed by His Royal Highness Prince Albert, as Master of the Trinity House, to the Right Hon. Edward Cardwell, late President of the Board of Trade, dated February 15, 1853, with reference to the future arrangements of the revenues of the Trinity Corporation. In this letter Mr. Cardwell was informed that the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House would use every legitimate means of bringing under the notice and favourable consideration of Government the claims of those poor men, the maimed and worn-out merchant seamen, their widows and orphans, 'whose interests are now in jeopardy, and they did not despair of convincing Her Majesty's Government of the justice and policy of maintaining at least the extent of the corporation's charities, or of substituting for them a more comprehensive and extensive scheme, such as shall do honour to the great maritime and commercial character of the United Kingdom.'

H.R.H. the  
Prince  
Consort.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons on Lighthouses, which sat in the year 1845, placed on record in their Report a strong recommendation, urging the necessity for making a provision for worn-out seamen of the merchant service.

Select Com-  
mittee on  
Light-  
houses.

The shipowners examined before that Committee expressed themselves willing to contribute to a fund for such a purpose.

Again in 1848, Lord Ellenborough's Commission thus recorded



Commission on Pensions, 1848.

their opinion:—‘We do not think it would be in accordance with public feeling, or consistent with public policy, to leave to chance the provision of a decent support, in their declining years, for men who, during their lives of peril and hard labour, contribute so largely to the wealth of their country, and who constitute the reserve to which it has recourse for security in time of war.’

Manning Commission, 1859.

The Manning Commission of 1859 gave great prominence to this question in their Report. They said that ‘among the many suggestions which had been offered to them, none had been so strongly and ably advocated as the re-establishment of the Merchant Seamen’s Pension Fund—free, indeed, from the objections which had caused the old fund to become insolvent.’

‘The seaman, on reaching the age of sixty, was in very many cases destitute, and obliged to have recourse to the parish for support; and it would be a great inducement to youths to join the merchant service if they saw that all sailors, on becoming disabled from old age or sickness, were provided for. The seaman, who perhaps squanders his wages within a few hours of his discharge, would never miss the deduction of one shilling per month; and a pension in his old age would be a strong inducement to remain in the service of his own country, instead of sailing under a foreign flag.’

Committee on Merchant Shipping, 1860.

The prospect of a pension was proposed by the Manning Commission of 1859, as one of the chief inducements to seamen to join the Royal Naval Reserve. The Commission on Merchant Shipping of 1860 pointed out that ‘in any plan which Parliament may hereafter adopt for the establishment of a fund, to which the seamen of both the royal and merchant navies would be contributory, the facilities afforded by the present shipping offices would greatly promote its success. The efforts of Parliament should be directed to carry out some such measure, combined with the establishment of training-ships.’ The Committee of Liverpool Shipowners strongly urged that a compulsory Benefit Fund should be established. In support of this proposal they referred to the evidence given before the Manning Commission of 1859, in which the re-establishment of a compulsory Merchant Seamen’s Fund was strongly advocated. The Liverpool Committee were of opinion ‘that both in the general interests of commerce and the

Liverpool Committee.

Scheme and arguments of the Committee.

nation, as well as of our merchant seamen, such a fund should be established, to which all boys out of training-ships and apprentices shall contribute from the beginning of their sea-life on board ship. There is at present no provision for old or disabled seamen except the workhouse.

‘Payments of one shilling a month, and, in cases of sons of parents of a better class, optional payments of two shillings a month would, at the age of fifty years, give, in the opinion of competent actuaries, a pension to old and infirm men of 10*l.* and 20*l.* a year. To this fund might be added the proceeds of unclaimed wages and effects of deceased seamen, amounting in 1857 to about 6,000*l.* a year,—now, probably, a much larger sum. The existence of such a fund would serve to bind the sailor both to his ship and his country, by the consideration, now almost unknown to him, of having something to lose by deserting his ship when abroad.’

Lastly, the Royal Commission of 1874 expressed an opinion that a self-supporting Pension Fund for the benefit of seamen, as suggested by the Manning Commission of 1859, might prove of great value, in creating a tie to bind the seamen of Great Britain to the merchant service of their own country. This subject did not lie strictly within the scope of their inquiry; but they were of opinion that it well deserved the attention of the Government.

Commis-  
sion of  
1874.

The case, however, will not have been fairly stated unless the objections that have been urged to the proposal have been fully and impartially considered.

Objections.

The paper, prepared by that most able official, Mr. Farrer, for the information of the Manning Commission, contained a summary of all that could be urged against a Seamen's Pension Fund. ‘A proposition,’ he said, ‘has frequently been made for establishing a general and compulsory Merchant Seamen's Fund. What,’ he asked, ‘would be the effect of the proposed scheme on merchant seamen? It is put forward as a benefit to seamen. It is a sort of compulsory Benefit Club or Merchant Service Superannuation Fund. It takes money from sailors when they have plenty, and keeps it for them against the time when they have none; and it is asserted that this is particularly desirable in the case of seamen; because they receive such large sums at the end of a voyage, and squander them so recklessly.’

Mr. Farrer.

‘It seems to me that this is altogether wrong. To make law a substitute for prudence,—to save a man's money for him in spite of himself, is tyrannical and demoralising. It is always felt as a grievance, and always creates dissatisfaction. It defeats its own object,—it substitutes external compulsion for self-control, and prevents the natural growth of forethought and real prudence.’

‘I believe, therefore, that the proposed scheme will be costly to the public, injurious to trade, harsh and demoralising to seamen, and that it will not effect the only object which could possibly justify the evils it must cause, viz., the efficient manning of the Navy.’

'These observations do not apply to a voluntary fund. Such a fund might be constituted, by allowing any seaman to subscribe, who was willing to abide by its conditions, by adding to the subscriptions from public money such a sum as would make the pensions worth having.'

Evidence  
before  
Manning  
Commis-  
sion.

In the course of his examination before the Commission of 1859, Mr. Farrer adverted to the past experience of the Government from the time of George the Second downwards, and he remarked that there had been no experience of voluntary funds, and a very unfortunate experience of compulsory funds.

Peculiar  
circum-  
stances of  
seamen.

Mr. Farrer relied too much upon the principles of strict political economy. He did not make sufficient allowance for the peculiar obstacles to the organisation of a voluntary pension fund amongst seamen. For this improvidence and other failings, which somewhat mar the seaman's great and noble qualities, there are many excuses :—

'Tis all men's office to speak patience  
To those that wring under the load of sorrow ;  
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,  
To be so moral, when he shall endure  
The like himself.

Seamen are necessarily a scattered body. Their lives are spent far away from home, on voyages protracted for indefinite periods. When at length they return to their native land it frequently happens that they are not paid off at the port at which they originally shipped ; and at whatever port they are discharged, they are, in the emphatic language of the Liverpool Seamen's Protective Society, 'a disorganised prey to designing knaves.'

Seamen of  
Reserve  
entitled to  
pension.

No provision for a Seamen's Pension Fund was made in the vague plan of the Government for training seamen, as shadowed forth in one of the clauses of the Bill introduced last session. Hence, I presume it to be intended that seamen belonging to the Naval Reserve shall alone become eligible for pensions.

Enough will now have been said to show that the individual opinion of the eminent statesmen who have been consulted, and the collective judgment of Commissions and Committees, have been unanimous in favour of a Seamen's Pension Fund.

As to com-  
pulsory  
contribu-  
tions.

Doubts have arisen, however, as to the necessity of making the contributions of the seamen compulsory. The majority of the members of the Manning Commission of 1859 preferred a voluntary self-supporting Pension Fund. While they admitted that there were many arguments in favour of a compulsory Merchant Seamen's



Fund, they thought, on the other hand, that strong objections must be anticipated, on the part of those who would regard it as a special tax levied on their own trade. 'They were not unmindful,' they said, 'of the advantages which would result from providing an adequate pension for seamen in old age, but they thought that it had better be done by means of a voluntary self-supporting fund. They regarded it as most important that the Pension Fund should be self-supporting, for, although the annual contributions of the men belonging to the Reserve were to be paid by the State, yet they wished to admit to the benefits of the fund every seaman, whether in the Navy or the merchant service, who might think proper to contribute. They believed that the voluntary contributors, probably not numerous at first, would become so, as the advantage of the pension to volunteers became known.' They added that the contributors should have the guarantee of the State for the due payment of their pension.

Views of  
Manning  
Commis-  
sion.

Mr. Lindsay, joining issue on this subject with the other Commissioners, in a separate paper gave his reasons in favour of a compulsory fund. Having begun life before the mast, and advanced to the command, and ultimately to be an extensive owner of shipping, he was well entitled from his personal experience to form an independent judgment, as to the scheme best adapted to the peculiar disposition of the seafaring class. He was convinced that any fund on the voluntary principle would be a failure. Not one-third,—he would almost have said not one-sixth,—of the seamen would subscribe to it. 'They would admit that it was a boon; but they would not think about it. When paid their wages they would demand the last farthing. Voluntary contributions in higher orders of society had signally failed. Large sums had been raised; but not one-third of those who ought to have subscribed to any particular object had done so; and in the best regulated association amongst artisans, he questioned whether the proportion of those who subscribed in any particular trade was one-half.'

Mr.  
Lindsay.

Mr. Lindsay's views were supported by all the officers at that time connected with the Board of Trade who were practically acquainted with seamen. Among them were Captain Brown, who had for many years held the office of Registrar-General of Seamen, and Sir Bartholomew Sullivan, the professional adviser of the Department, who had taken the deepest interest in the subject.

Captain Brown, in urging the establishment of a Seamen's Pension Fund, expressed an opinion that seamen of every character, whether naval or merchant, should partake of its benefits in con-

Captain  
Brown,  
R.N.

sideration of subscribing to its support when earning wages. He argued that 'establishing a provision for old age is a very different matter from exacting services or obligations which affect a man's personal liberty. Hence the contributions necessary should be deducted from wages, and paid by the masters of vessels to receivers, as was formerly the case.'

The principle of free action had lately been established, and it was said to be contrary to this principle to make a Merchant Seamen's Fund compulsory; but it must be considered that mariners followed a peculiar calling, which made them migratory, and gave them no opportunity to conform to the regulations of clubs, to which people in a corresponding class of life, and having a fixed place of residence, could contribute.

Experience has shown the soundness of these opinions. Since the date of Captain Brown's paper, with the spread of education, the powers of the working class for organisation have been greatly augmented. We see the result in the establishment of co-operative associations on an extensive scale, and in the general progress of mutual benefit societies among all classes of the working people; but among the seafaring class no corresponding development has taken place of similar organisations. Up to the present time nothing of the sort exists, with the exception of a certain number of burial clubs, chiefly remarkable, it is said, for their extravagant management and the small profits derived by the subscribers.

The evidence of all the professional officers of the Board of Trade who were consulted by the Manning Commission was in the same direction.

Mr. Farrer.

Even Mr. Farrer, the strongest opponent in those days of a compulsory Pension Fund for seamen, spoke doubtfully of the success of a voluntary fund. In the evidence he gave before Mr. Lindsay's Committee on Shipping in 1860, he admitted that it would be a long time before you got any considerable number of seamen, engaged on foreign voyages, to come into a voluntary fund. He therefore suggested that a commencement should be made with the more prudent class of men in the North-Eastern ports. Again, when asked how many seamen would subscribe the sum necessary to provide a pension, he replied that it must be a matter of doubt and of experience; you could not tell until you tried it; but he thought the experiment might be very well tried in the mode recommended by the Manning Commission.

Mr.  
Dunbar.

The view entertained by the nautical men at the Board of Trade as to the necessity of compulsion was fully shared by the most

experienced shipowners. Mr. Dunbar told Lord Ellenborough's Commission in 1848, that unless the payment was compulsory you would get little or nothing contributed towards it; and he added that he did not think the levy of a shilling a month from seamen under the old Seamen's Pension Fund, large as the deduction appeared to be from their limited income, ever cost them a thought.

Mr. Graves told Mr. Lindsay's Committee that if there was a fund, it would be a considerable tie to seamen to remain in the British service. There was in America an important fund connected with their sea-service, established upon the principle of compulsory payment. He doubted whether any free system would be successful in this country; and, although he did not like compulsory measures, he thought that, in the case of the Seamen's Pension Fund, it was a necessity. Whatever was necessary should be levied by means of a monthly payment made by the seamen.

The most recent experience in the Royal Navy leads to the same conclusion. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre said, in his remarks on the paper read by Captain Wilson before the United Service Institution, in the Session of 1875, that 'seamen were not in the habit of looking to their pensions, at all events not during the first ten years of their service. It might be that afterwards, when the pension came somewhat closer, it entered more into their calculations.'

On looking back to the evidence taken by the Manning Committee of 1852, we find Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's conclusions strongly confirmed by the recruiting officers and seamen examined by the Committee.

All these individual opinions are confirmed in the following passage from the Report of Lord Ellenborough's Commission, a report to which the more weight attaches, inasmuch as that Commission is the only public body which has been specially appointed to consider the question of pension to seamen: 'We are strongly confirmed in the opinion that it is not safe to trust, in this country, to the voluntary contributions of sailors themselves for the support of an institution, having for its object their relief, when worn out, by the view of what has occurred in Holland. There, if anywhere, it might have been expected, from the steady and prudent habit of the people, that seamen would have been found to contribute generally to the admirably designed institution called "The Seamen's Hope," established for their relief. But even there not one-third of the seamen availed themselves of the benefit thus offered to them. There are few countries in which there is not some law, rendering it obligatory on seamen to contribute a portion of their pay to a fund for their relief

Mr. Graves.

Mr. G.  
Shaw-  
Lefevre.Manning  
Commit-  
tee, 1852.Report of  
Lord  
Ellen-  
borough.



in sickness and old age ; and in Sweden, where all the provisions for the benefit of seamen and for their regulation are of the most perfect character, the contributions of seamen are aided by a tax on tonnage.

Inquiries  
by Captain  
Brown,  
1845.

Inquiries were made in the year 1845 on behalf of the Board of Trade by Captain Brown. He took great pains to examine many intelligent seamen on the point, and found that they were generally willing to consent to a forced contribution, provided they had something substantial in return for it. His belief was that were it pointed out to seamen that, if they would consent to certain deductions from their wages, they would receive advantages, when no longer able to continue at sea, greater considerably than they could obtain from any benefit society, few, if any, would object to contribute. 'My reason,' he says, 'for making this assertion is that, during the long period I was engaged on the business of the fund, I lost no opportunity of obtaining the opinions of seamen on the subject.'

'Whatever feeling may have been displayed towards the old fund, I have ascertained from many sources that there need be no apprehension of objections on the part of seamen to a fund such as I have described, provided they are guaranteed on the faith of Parliament a *substantial pension* in consideration of their present payments, and they would not object, under such assurance, to increase the amount of their contributions.'

Petition  
presented  
by Admiral  
Bowles.

It has already been stated that the old Merchant Seamen's Fund, which owed its origin to the petition of the sailors themselves, was compulsory. When the Winding-up Act was passed, leaving the continuance of contributions optional with individuals, a petition was presented by Admiral Bowles, the chairman of the London Sailors' Home, signed by 250 masters, 150 mates, and 700 seamen, stating that any attempt to establish any such provision as they needed in their old age on the voluntary principle would most likely be precarious and inefficient for the purpose.

Shipowners  
should con-  
tribute.

Any objection on the part of the seamen to a first contribution would be mitigated, or probably wholly removed, if some contribution were levied on shipping in support of the fund. It was on this principle that Lord Ellenborough's Committee suggested an extension of the taxation for the benefit of the worn-out seamen to that class which derived its wealth from their exertions. 'We cannot doubt that the owners of British vessels would consent to a moderate duty on tonnage, the proceeds of which would really be applied substantially to the special security of their own property, by giving contentment to those to whom that property is intrusted. It was but

just that they should relieve others who, under the operation of the Poor Law, would become chargeable with the maintenance of persons by whose labour they had never benefited. They therefore proposed a tonnage duty of 1s. a ton by the year upon all vessels belonging to the United Kingdom entering or clearing out.' It is due to the large shipowners to acknowledge that as a class they have never shown themselves reluctant to make a contribution in aid of a Seamen's Fund.

The Committee of Liverpool Shipowners expressed their approval of the payment of a tonnage contribution from shipowners for the relief of seamen. They propose that, 'in addition to the compulsory benefit fund, to which all seamen are to contribute, "a benevolent due" of, say, one farthing per ton per voyage shall be levied upon all shipping entering our ports; by which, although the sums individually contributed would be comparatively insignificant and unfelt, yet in the aggregate the amount so raised, to be applied to useful and benevolent purposes, for the benefit of seamen, would be very considerable. The disposal of such funds might safely be left in the hands of appointed local authorities.'

Liverpool  
Committee.

Among the reasons for this suggestion they refer to the encouragement which would be given to seamen by the aid which, in various ways, in sickness, disablement and old age, might from this source be supplied. 'It must be borne in mind,' they observe, 'that an immense proportion of the owners of vessels entering our ports are either foreigners or non-resident. Such absentee owners neither sympathise with, nor in anywise share, the burdens and deep responsibilities which the constant influx of immense numbers of seamen into our great seaports entails upon the inhabitants; and they might very justly be made contributors to the fund in question.'

To determine the probable incidence of the payments towards the Fund, whether they will fall ultimately on the shipowner, or the seamen, or on the merchant who pays the freight, may be an interesting problem to the political economist, but it is not a matter of practical moment.

Incidence  
of the con-  
tributions.

Service under any other foreign national flag should involve the forfeiture of all claim to a pension, and service for two successive years under any foreign flag in private employment should involve the same penalty. In the adoption of such a rule we should be following the precedents established in Norway and Holland. In Norway a seaman cannot enter a foreign service without giving security for his return within two years. In Holland a contributor to the Seamen's Hope Society, when he engages to serve under a

Conditions  
of pension.

foreign flag, forfeits all claim to succour for himself, his wife, and his children.

Lord Ellenborough's Commission very properly suggested that it would not be expedient to withhold from the merchant seaman the power of again acquiring a claim to a pension, by subsequent service and payment of dues to the fund for a period of five years.

The administration must be centred in the Board of Trade, so that the seaman may be enabled to pay his contribution and to receive his pension through any of the shipping offices. If the payment and scales of pension are established in the first instance upon well-considered rules, a deficiency in the funds is a highly improbable contingency.

Projects for  
reviving  
Pension  
Fund.  
Bill of  
1850.

Several measures were prepared between 1844 and 1850 for amending the Merchant Seamen's Fund Act, and establishing a fund for the maintenance of worn-out sailors. A Bill, introduced in 1850, contained a provision assigning 30,000*l.* a year on the part of Government in aid of the fund.

After a number of conferences with the members for the seaports, and when it appeared that no satisfactory arrangement could be effected for consolidating the fund under Government supervision, or for equalising the payments, it was reluctantly determined to wind up the old fund, leaving the establishment of a new scheme under better regulations for future consideration.

Trinity  
House.

Lord Ellenborough's Commission proposed a payment, in aid of the Pension Fund, from the Trinity Corporation. The Trinity House was originally constituted as a seamen's benefit society; and, as it appeared from the accounts submitted in 1848 that the average expenditure of the Corporation in pensions to merchant seamen, their widows, and their orphans amounted to 25,000*l.* a year, the Commission proposed that an equal sum should be annually paid to the general fund.

The payment, however, by the Corporation of pensions to merchant seamen ceased in 1854, the Government at that time not considering the surplus light dues applicable to such a purpose; and what the Trinity House now gives away is only given to master mariners, and mainly under specific trusts.

Scale of  
pension.

Having referred to the various sources whence contributions may be claimed, we have now to consider what scales of pension it will be possible to allow. As the pension must be sufficient in amount to keep the seaman out of the workhouse, it cannot be less than 15*l.* or 20*l.* a year; and the question arises whether it will be possible to guarantee so large an amount, without calling upon the seaman to



pay such a contribution as he would consider intolerably burdensome.

Elaborate calculations were made by Mr. Finlaison, the actuary to the Treasury, and by Captain Pierce, for the information of the Manning Commission of 1859. In his Report Mr. Finlaison stated that the law of mortality, commonly known as the Northampton Table, which takes a more unfavourable view of the duration of human life than almost any published experience, was adopted, after much consideration, as the fittest for the purpose of computing the charges likely to be thrown on the new fund, in respect of the pensions to worn-out seamen.

Mr. Finlaison's calculations.

Basing his calculations on the data obtained from the Northampton Tables, and the returns from the friendly societies, Mr. Finlaison estimated that (1) the pension for life after fifty, which 20s. per annum of contribution, commencing at the age of fourteen, and payable quarterly until the pension commenced, would provide, without any reference to the principle of secession, was 8*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.* a year; (2) that, if secession were taken into account, the same yearly contribution of 20s. would provide a pension of 11*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* a year. If the pension commenced at the age of fifty-two it would be 15*l.*; if at the age of fifty-five it would be 18*l.* a year.

The Manning Commissioners adopted these figures. They proposed that the State should contribute to the Pension Fund of the Naval Reserve Force 1*l.* a year for every man enrolled, and the same sum for every boy under training in a school-ship. While the boys were under articles in the merchant service, the shipowner was to contribute 1*l.* annually to the Pension Fund, in consideration of the education which the apprentice had received at the public expense on board the school-ship.

Manning Commission adopted Mr. Finlaison's scale.

Thus the payment by the sailors, according to the proposal of the Commissioners, amounted to 1*l.* a year, or 1*s.* 8*d.* a month; and this payment, if commenced at the age of fourteen, was estimated to be sufficient to secure for the seaman a pension of not less than 12*l.* at the age of fifty, and 15*l.* at the age of fifty-two, and of 18*l.* at fifty-five.

The beneficial results to the permanent contributors from the number of seceders from various causes having been allowed for in the calculations of Mr. Finlaison, the pension proposed by the Manning Commission was 1*s.* a day, or twice as high as that proposed by Lord Ellenborough.

In the calculations of the Manning Commission no allowance was made for the additional 10,000*l.* a year, being the value of the effects

and wages of deceased seamen, or for the proceeds of a benevolent due from shipping, which, if taken at 1s. a ton, as proposed by Lord Ellenborough, would now realise 250,000*l.* a year, or more than the whole amount contributed by the seamen themselves. In all probability a quarter of the amount recommended by the Pension Commission would not be considered ample. Neither was it assumed that a direct contribution might be expected from the State. All or either of these supplementary sources of revenue might be fitly applied in aid of a Widows' Benevolent Fund, or in adding to the pensions, or in reducing the contributions of the seamen.

In view of the great uncertainty of life and health, Mr. Farrer wisely pointed out that it would be desirable, if it could be done, to postpone a little the time at which the pension should be paid, and, by means of the addition to the fund thus gained, to give pensions in cases where men were worn out before arriving at the given age. It was on this ground that Mr. Lindsay objected to a fixed rule for the commencement of pension at a comparatively early age. 'It is,' he said, 'an erroneous principle to pension men at an age when they are able to maintain themselves; and if carried to the extent necessary to maintain a reserve, it is the most expensive system which can be adopted. Men require pensions when unfit for labour, but if when in the enjoyment of health they receive a daily payment, however small, they will too often depend upon that alone, and not upon their own exertions. Both individual and national prosperity results from the development of these exertions. Therefore, when a man is fit for work, it is true policy for the State to refrain from assisting him. It is preferable to allow that which is due to him to accumulate until the period when he is indeed in need of aid. It is for these considerations that I prefer the age of sixty as the period when men should become entitled to be claimants on the Seamen's Fund. But of course this term could be modified and lowered, perhaps to fifty-five, if the results of more exact calculation should prove that the fund was able to bear it without encroaching upon the benevolence of Parliament.'

## CHAPTER XVI.

## SPEECH ON A PENSION FUND FOR SEAMEN.

*House of Commons, Friday, March 10, 1876.**Reprinted from 'Hansard.'*

MR. T. BRASSEY, in rising to call attention to the present condition of our merchant seamen, and to the report of the Royal Commission on Pensions to Seamen, and to the regulations in force in foreign countries for providing pensions to seamen; and to move a resolution thereon, said: Sir, in order to justify the motion which I desire to submit to the approval of the House, I shall not consider it necessary to allege that our seamen have deteriorated. I believe that there are in our merchant service many ill-conducted and inefficient men, while there are happily a still larger number who are the best seamen in the world. I would rather insist on the miseries and hardships inseparable from a sailor's life. It is on this ground, and because our national security and greatness are mainly dependent on the loyal attachment of our seamen to their native land, that I would especially urge the re-establishment of the Seamen's Pension Fund. The subject has been frequently investigated by Royal Commissions and by Parliamentary Committees, and they have invariably recorded a strong opinion in favour of the establishment of a Seamen's Pension Fund. The fact that no practical legislation has resulted is a convincing proof that the special interests of seamen have been too long neglected. That negligence has arisen, not so much from lack of sympathy, as from ignorance of the condition and necessities of a class whose calling keeps them apart from the great mass of their fellow-countrymen. The efforts of the hon. member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) have of late aroused the deepest interest in seamen, and my hope is that I may be able to obtain for the proposal I now submit to the House a support which, under ordinary circumstances, I could scarcely hope to command.



Seamen's  
Pension  
Funds  
abroad.

The example of foreign nations supplies me with an important argument. A plan for securing pensions to seamen was established in France by the great minister, Colbert. The fund of the Invalides de la Marine is supported by contributions of three per cent., deducted from the pay of all persons in the national or the merchant service. In 1844, the fund had an invested capital of 4,000,000*l.* sterling, and an income of 300,000*l.* a year. Mariners became entitled to pensions after their names had been borne for twenty-five years on a ship's articles, and they had attained the age of fifty. The pension varies from 600*f.* to 96*f.* a year, according to the grade of the pensioner. Widows receive half the pension to which their husbands were entitled, and an allowance is made to children. In the United States there is a benefit fund, supported by a compulsory deduction of 20 cents per month from the seamen's wages. Every worn-out or disabled seaman is entitled to maintenance in one of the asylums established by the State on the American seaboard. In Norway, by the royal rescript of 1834, an independent charitable institution for seamen has been founded in the principal seaports; and at the time when seamen sign their articles of agreement for a foreign voyage, it is usual to agree upon a *pro rata* contribution to the institution established in the port from which he sails. The Scuola di San Marco, at Venice, is an institution very similar to that of the Invalides de la Marine in Paris. In Holland, we find an institution called the Seamen's Hope, on a somewhat similar plan to those established in Norway and Sweden.

Seamen's  
Pension  
Fund.

In our own country a Seamen's Pension Fund formerly existed. It was established by Act of Parliament in 1747, in compliance with a petition from merchant seamen. Its object was to give to the merchant service the same advantages which the Navy enjoyed at Greenwich. It was supported by a contribution of 1*s.* a month, which was stopped from each man's wages; and the fund received liberal contributions from great merchants and shipowners. It worked extremely well until the year 1820, when our great merchants unfortunately withdrew from the shipping trade. From that period their voluntary contributions rapidly fell off. In the meanwhile, a fatal laxity had crept into the management, the results of which were described by Admiral Denman in his evidence before the Manning Commission of 1859. While the State was responsible for the management of the fund, its administration was entrusted to a local committee at each port. There was no general system, and no effectual audit was provided. Hence arose jobbery, confusion, and eventual bankruptcy. At one port pensions of 13*l.* were paid;

at others the amount was 2*l.* or 3*l.*; and again at others it was as low as 10*s.* A widow at Sunderland, aged 84, received 2*s.* a month; while a widow at Liverpool, aged 24, received 14*s.* for herself, and 12*s.* each for her children. Such inequality justly created discontent; and the fund being bankrupt, a Winding-up Act was passed in 1851. The process has already cost 1,000,000*l.*, and will probably cost 500,000*l.* more.

No objection has ever been taken to the principle of a compulsory self-supporting pension fund by those who are best acquainted with the condition of our seamen. The Select Committee on Lighthouses, in 1845, strongly insisted on the necessity for such a fund. The Royal Commission on Pensions, appointed in 1848, made a report, which is still the best authority on this subject, and which was entirely in favour of continuing the Pension Fund, under improved regulations. In 1853 the Prince Consort, as Master of the Trinity House, addressed a letter to Lord Cardwell, then President of the Board of Trade, in which he urged, on behalf of the Elder Brethren, the importance of substituting for the corporation's charities a more comprehensive scheme, such as should do honour to the great maritime and commercial character of the United Kingdom. The Manning Commission of 1859 gave great prominence to this subject in their Report. They said that, among the many suggestions which had been offered to them, none had been so ably advocated as the re-establishment of the Merchant Seamen's Pension Fund; and that such a provision would be a great inducement to youths to join and to seamen to remain in, our merchant service. The Committee on Merchant Shipping of 1860 concurred in this view, and pointed out the great facilities afforded for the administration of the fund through the shipping offices which had recently been established. Passing over an interval of several years, I may quote as the latest authority on this subject the Report of the Liverpool Committee of Shipowners on the Condition of our Merchant Seamen. They were strongly of opinion that, both in the general interests of commerce and the nation, as well as of our merchant seamen, a Compulsory Benefit Fund should be established, there being at present no provision for old or disabled seamen except the workhouse. The existence of such a fund would serve to bind the sailor both to his ship and his country by the consideration, now almost unknown to him, of having something to lose by deserting his ship when abroad. Lastly, the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships expressed their opinion that a self-supporting Pension Fund for seamen might prove of great value, in creating a tie to bind the British seaman to the

Self-  
supporting  
Pension  
Fund.

merchant service of his own country. The subject, they said, well deserved the attention of the Government. The concurrence of these eminent authorities supplies a conclusive argument in favour of a Seamen's Pension Fund; and a calm consideration of the proposal on its merits cannot fail to satisfy the House that it is both reasonable and necessary. Seamen are a scattered body. Their lives are spent far away from home, and when they return it may often happen that they are not paid off at the port at which they originally shipped. They cannot, therefore, organise a machinery for collecting contributions or administering the funds required to provide sufficient pensions. The task, in short, is so extensive in its scope and important in a national point of view, that it can only be carried out by the Government, and this is the conclusion at which every Commission and Committee, during the last thirty years, has arrived.

Compul-  
sory contri-  
butions  
from  
seamen.

The necessity of making the contributions compulsory is the only point on which doubt has been felt. The majority of the Manning Commissioners proposed that the Pension Fund should be self-supporting but voluntary. The contribution for the Naval Reserve was to be paid by the State; but they wished to admit to the benefit of the fund every seaman, whether in the Navy or the merchant service, who might think proper to contribute. Mr. Lindsay differed from the other Commissioners; and his opinion, which is of the greatest value, was that any Pension Fund on the voluntary principle would be a failure. These views were shared by all the professional officers of the Board of Trade. The late Mr. Graves told the Merchant Shipping Committee of 1860 that, although he did not like compulsory measures, yet he thought in the case of the Seamen's Pension Fund compulsion would be a necessity. The same opinion was expressed by Captain Ballantyne, who was specially appointed to represent the views of the Mercantile Marine Association of Liverpool before the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships. The views of those who are in favour of compulsory contributions were very ably summed up in the memorandum, prepared for the Manning Commission by Captain Pierce, Superintendent of the Sailors' Home in London. 'Seamen,' he said, 'were an exceptional class.' What other description of men required their agreements for labour and service, the correction of their accounts, and the payment of their wages, to be watched over by a public officer? This arose from their habits, and their peculiar duties. From youth to manhood they were exposed to temptations and dangers, by sea and land, which surrounded no other class; and they therefore required



more than others the protecting arm of a kind and beneficent Government to do for them what they could not and would not do for themselves. Why is it that the seaman does not calculate? It is because the universal feeling among seamen is that they will not live to be old. They see so many die around them, they so seldom meet with an old sailor at sea, that they consider it quite unnecessary to prepare, as other people do, for the contingency of old age. But, it may be asked, what are the views entertained by the seamen themselves? Inquiries were made in 1845, on behalf of the Board of Trade, by Captain Brown, who reported, as the result of conversations with many hundreds of seamen, that there was scarcely any objection to contribute, provided a substantial pension were guaranteed by Parliament. Again, when the Winding-up Act was passed, a Petition was presented to this House, signed by 400 masters and mates and 700 seamen, stating that any attempt to raise a Pension Fund on a voluntary principle would be precarious and inefficient. I have recently made an effort to ascertain the feelings of the seamen by personal inquiry. I addressed a meeting at the Liverpool Sailors' Home in December last on this subject, when a resolution was unanimously passed in favour of the plan. I have subsequently been in correspondence with the Secretary of the Seamen's Protective Society, of Liverpool, which numbers several thousand members, all able seamen; and I am informed that since the date of the meeting the subject has been repeatedly considered by the society, and that the general principle of compulsion has been invariably approved. Ten days ago I attended a meeting of seamen at the Shipping Office in the East India Road, when the plan was also received with the warmest approval. But the main point we have to consider is whether the thing proposed is right in itself; for if the House be satisfied that a particular measure is calculated to do good, they will probably be prepared to exert, in case of need, a gentle pressure on prejudiced or improvident men, whom it might be necessary to train up in habits of prudence.

Any objection which might be raised on the part of the seamen to a forced contribution would be removed if the shipowners were prepared to take a share of the burden. Lord Ellenborough suggested a tonnage contribution of 1s. a ton, arguing that it was but just that the shipowner should relieve those who would otherwise become chargeable with the maintenance of the seamen by whose labour the shipowner himself had specially benefited. Mr. Young, the Chairman of the London Shipowners' Society, proposed that the necessary sum should be raised in three equal amounts—by contri-

and ship-  
owners.

butions from the State, the seaman, and the shipowner. With these views Mr. Green and Mr. Dunbar concurred. More recently the Committee of Liverpool Shipowners have proposed that a benevolent due of one farthing a ton should be levied upon all shipping entering our ports, by which means a considerable amount would be raised. It has been calculated by an officer of the Cunard service that the Liverpool proposal for a tonnage contribution would produce 60,000*l.* a year. Coasters would pay an annual contribution, in lieu of dues for every voyage. Mr. Lindsay expressed an opinion that even though the payment required from the seamen should, in point of fact, fall absolutely on the shipowners, they would be gainers thereby; for the seamen would by this means be bound to the English flag, and less easily tempted to desertion by the higher wages in America. Wages from Liverpool, for a voyage to Callao and back, in a sailing ship, average 60*s.* a month. The wages at Callao and the colonial ports are almost double that amount. The result is, that the seaman, having nothing to lose by desertion, is easily tempted to leave his ship, and the shipowner must engage a substitute for the voyage home, at double the amount originally agreed upon. Two months' wages must be paid—the proceeds of the advance note passing, as a matter of course, into the hands of the crimp. The administration of the fund must be in the hands of the State, and, with proper regulations, there should be no deficiency. But even if there were an occasional small deficit, it is to be remembered that under the Winding-up Act the State took possession of 200,000*l.*, and that the Government now receives an unclaimed surplus of 9,000*l.* a year from the wages and effects of deceased seamen, which are administered by the Board of Trade.

Scale of  
pension.

With the aid of these supplementary resources we have next to consider what amount of pension it will be possible to guarantee to the seamen without loss to the State. The calculations made by Mr. Finlaison for Mr. Labouchere in 1850 and for the Manning Commission in 1859 were based upon the Northampton Tables, which gave a more unfavourable view of the expectations of human life than almost any other published experience, and which, it was ascertained by communication with the seamen's benefit societies, accurately represent the duration of the lives of mariners. Mr. Finlaison was asked by the Manning Commission to state what amount of pension, commencing at the age of 50, would be secured by an annual payment of 1*l.* from the age of 14. The amount, according to the Northampton Tables, payable at the age of 50 would be 8*l.*, and at 55, 12*l.* a year. In this calculation, however, no allow-

ance was made for the secession of some of those who had been contributors to the fund. When, however, allowance was made for the probable number of seceders, which, in order to make a safe calculation, was taken at three per cent. per annum, it appeared that the pension commencing at 50 would be increased to 11*l.* 5*s.*, and that it would be 18*l.* commencing at 55. The number of seceders was taken at the most moderate amount. In the Royal Navy desertion took place to the extent of eight per cent. per annum of the whole number of men employed; and in the merchant service there were fewer obstacles in the way of desertion. Had Mr. Finlaison calculated upon a secession to the extent of eight per cent., the amount of pension at the age of 50 would have been raised to at least 17*l.* a year. It will be observed with regret that no proposal has been made with respect to widows. The Commission on Pensions were of my opinion that it would be possible to require the payment of a contribution sufficient to provide for this object. They therefore proposed a voluntary benefit society for seamen's widows, to which the State should contribute 5,000*l.* a year.

I opened my statement by asserting the importance of a Seamen's Pension Fund on national grounds. I conclude by pointing out that it has always been associated by its warmest advocates with the organisation of the Naval Reserve. Mr. Lindsay was of opinion that, in lieu of the annual retainer, it would be far wiser to pass men for a year through the Navy, and, instead of giving the yearly fee and an imperfect training, as at present, to offer to the men enrolled in the Reserve the prospect of a pension of 20*l.* a year, to commence at the age of 50, provided they had in the meantime always followed the sea and held themselves in readiness to serve in the Navy. He calculated that, supposing a Reserve of 60,000 men were obtained, not more than 7,000 would live through their precarious and hazardous career to claim their pension. Thus, for 140,000*l.* a year we should have, as he believed, a far more effective Reserve than we could command by a payment of 720,000*l.* a year under our present system. I appeal once more to the example of every maritime State, and to the repeated recommendations of the highest authorities in the country, as furnishing a conclusive argument in favour of the proposal I now make. Why should we longer hesitate to adopt a course which wise statesmanship and enlightened charity alike recommend? I beg, Sir, to move—

‘That, in the opinion of the House, it is expedient to establish a compulsory, self-supporting Pension Fund for Seamen.’



## CHAPTER XVII.

## PENSIONS TO MERCHANT SEAMEN.

*House of Commons, August 1, 1881.*

SIR THOMAS BRASSEY said that the hon. member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley) had made a persuasive appeal on behalf of the aged seamen. In much that he had said he concurred. Some years ago he had brought forward a proposal in that House for a seamen's benefit fund, to be managed by the officials of the shipping offices. He still cherished the hope that the merchant seamen might receive some assistance in their efforts to combine for their mutual support in advancing years. It was not an essential feature of the plan for a merchant seamen's fund that the State should make a contribution of money. Whatever might be the decision on this point, it was his duty to resist any proposal to take money from Greenwich funds. Before submitting a short statement of the leading facts, there was one obvious remark which he might offer. His hon. friend would acknowledge that the injustice of which he complained was not due to any action which had been taken by the present Admiralty. Similar demands had been steadily resisted by successive Boards, who were under strong temptation to become popular at the public expense by lavish charities to the merchant seamen. The unanimity of their decisions was, in his judgment, conclusive. The present Government, however, in their anxious desire to be just, had once more consulted the experienced officers of the Board of Trade and the Admiralty, under whom the pensions to seamen and the funds of Greenwich Hospital were administered. The papers containing the correspondence with the Board of Trade would be distributed in a few days. The constituents of his hon. friend would doubtless be supplied with copies of the papers, and when they had read them they would be convinced that they had no claim whatever to further assistance from Greenwich.

Without entering too minutely into details, he might observe

that the relief of seamen who had served in the Royal Navy was the exclusive object of the noble foundation of William and Mary. That object was steadily kept in view both in the Act of 1696, under which the seamen of the merchant service were required to pay 6*l.* a month to Greenwich; and, again, in the Act of 1834, under which they were relieved from the obligation. The protection afforded by the Navy to the commerce of the country was held to be a sufficient justification for imposing a tax on the merchant service.

Hospital  
founded  
for Navy.

Passing from the original object for which the hospital was founded to the subsequent efforts of the State to administer to the wants of the merchant service, he might refer to the onerous obligation undertaken in connection with the Merchant Seamen's Fund. The management was unsatisfactory, and in 1851 the fund was wound up by Act of Parliament. Pensions were granted at the average rates of the preceding five years, and the Exchequer was made responsible for any deficiency which might arise. The net result had been a loss of no less than 920,000*l.* Notwithstanding the losses sustained in connection with their fund, a generous gift was made to the merchant seamen on the occasion of the closing of Greenwich Hospital as an asylum for the Royal Navy. By the Greenwich Hospital Act of 1869, power was taken to expend 4,000*l.* a year in providing pensions at the rate of 3*l.* 8*s.* to seamen who had contributed 6*l.* a month to Greenwich Hospital for five years prior to 1835, and who were not in receipt of a pension from the Merchant Seamen's Fund. In making this concession the Admiralty were doing an act of grace, and they distinctly declined to acknowledge any legal liability. In 1872 a further concession was made. The annual expenditure from Greenwich funds was no longer limited to 4,000*l.* a year, and an Act was passed authorising the purchase of annuities by the Board of Trade out of funds provided by Greenwich Hospital for all seamen who could prove a claim to pension under the regulations laid down in 1869. The charge which had come on Greenwich Hospital in providing pensions and annuities under the Acts of 1869 and 1872 had already amounted to 158,000*l.*, and it was contemplated that a further sum of from 40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* would be required.

Pensions  
granted.

The regulations under which the pensions were granted had been made the subject of complaint. It had been argued that seamen who were in receipt of pensions from the mercantile marine fund ought not to be debarred from the enjoyment of pensions from Greenwich Hospital. In November last the Admiralty addressed a letter to the Board of Trade asking them, as the official protectors

Claims of  
merchant  
seamen.

of the merchant seamen, how far the sum of 3*l.* 8*s.* per annum, whether paid in the shape of a Greenwich pension or a Merchant Seamen's Fund pension, was a sufficient equivalent for the enforced contribution of 1*s.* a month. In reply, they were told that the sum now paid was in excess of the value of the enforced contribution with interest.

Widows' pensions.

The hon. member for Sunderland was not content to urge the claims of the seamen themselves, and he asked that pensions should be extended to widows. The demand could not be presented to Parliament as a matter of right and justice. If, on the other hand, the cause of the widows were pleaded as a case for the charitable consideration of the Government, he had already shown that there were other resources directly arising from the mercantile marine from which, if they thought it right to make a concession, an appropriation might be made. The pensions from the mercantile marine fund and the grants from the Greenwich funds, so far from being an inadequate return for the contributions, had already involved a loss to the State of more than 1,100,000*l.*

Sources from which property of Greenwich Hospital derived.

Having dealt thus far with the case of the seamen as founded on their individual contributions, he passed on to the claims put forward on their behalf as heirs to former generations of contributors. It had been maintained in several petitions that not less than 2,000,000*l.* of the accumulated funds of the hospital had been derived from the enforced contributions of merchant seamen. The statement was incorrect. The personal property of Greenwich Hospital was mainly derived from other sources—from unclaimed prize-money, assigned to the institution in the reign of Queen Anne, and from the prize-money of deserters, made over to the hospital in the reign of George II. It included a percentage of five per cent. on all prizes taken during the great war. The sale of portions of the Derwent-water estates, which were appropriated to the hospital in the reign of George II., had been another source whence the personal property had been accumulated. But of all these sources of wealth, the most important was the transfer, in 1814, of the funds of the Chatham chest, amounting to 1,355,000*l.* The Chatham chest was originally established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the revenues were derived from Parliamentary grants, charitable bequests, prize-money, and a tax of 6*d.* per month levied on seamen serving in the Navy.

Appropriation of funds.

Having shown that the merchant seamen have no claim, whether in law or in equity, to further contributions from Greenwich Hospital, it might not seem necessary to carry forward this discussion. It might, however, be satisfactory to the House to know the numerous



and benevolent uses to which the funds of the hospital were devoted. Its whole revenues were bestowed in ministering to the necessities of men who had done long service to the country. Out of a total income of 161,000*l.*, no less than 120,000*l.* were expended in pensions and gratuities. Besides the payment of pensions, they were educating 1,000 boys, the sons of seamen and marines, giving them instruction in a trade at a cost below the average in similar institutions.

It had been objected that too large a sum was expended in salaries. To this he had to answer that the school was completely reorganised in 1870 by a committee of which the present Secretary to the Admiralty was the chairman. But although the establishment was thus recently revised, they had thought it right to appoint a committee, which was on the point of reporting the result of its inquiries. He had reason to know that the work undertaken by Admiral Hickley and his colleagues, the member for Falmouth, and Sir Digby Murray, had been thoroughly done, and that it would result in valuable improvements in the dietary of the school, and in the training of the boys for the sea service. Where an increase of expenditure was required, they would be able to meet the cost by economy in other directions.

In conclusion, he had to express the hope that his hon. friend would be satisfied with the explanations he had received. He had presented the full statement of the case as put forward in behalf of the merchant seamen, but he hoped that he had made it clear that the cost of the benevolent plan of his hon. friend could not in justice be made a charge upon Greenwich funds. Hon. members would believe that it was not an agreeable task to resist an appeal on behalf of aged and, perhaps, necessitous persons belonging to a class with which he had a warm sympathy. In following his hazardous calling the merchant seaman did a service to Society and to the State, and he had a strong claim to our benevolence; but the seamen of the Navy might be called upon at any moment for yet greater sacrifices. Even in peace, grave disasters might occur, bringing misery to many homes. The present Board of Admiralty were anxious to make more ample provision for these distressing calamities, and if they permitted an unjustifiable encroachment on the limited resources of Greenwich Hospital, they would deprive themselves of the means of giving relief to seamen who had grown old in the service of their country and to the widows and orphans of their comrades who had fallen at the post of duty.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Original question again proposed.

Salaries.  
Claims of  
Navy.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## HEALTH OF SEAMEN AFLOAT.

Inquiry of  
Society for  
Improving  
Condition  
of Seamen.

SCURVY having been by no means rare in the British merchant service, the subject naturally received much attention from the Society established in 1867 for Improving the Condition of Merchant Seamen. Their Report was prepared by Admiral Ryder, with the able assistance of Captain Toynbee, Commander Verney, and the Secretary to the Seamen's Hospital Society.

Scurvy  
cases :  
'Dread-  
nought.'

In the sixteen years previous to the date of the Report of the Committee, the number of cases of scurvy brought for treatment to the 'Dreadnought' had been gradually increasing. In 1850 there were 55 cases; in 1856, 91; in 1865, 102; in 1866 to November 16, 88.

The following classification was made of the scurvy cases received at the 'Dreadnought' in reference to nationality :—

In 1843, from British vessels	.	.	.	57
„ Foreign „	.	.	.	29
				<u>86</u>
In 1864, from British vessels	.	.	.	65
„ Foreign „	.	.	.	18
				<u>83</u>
In 1865, from British vessels	.	.	.	101
„ Foreign „	.	.	.	1
				<u>102</u>
In 1866 (to November 16, from British vessels	.	.	.	83
„ Foreign „	.	.	.	5
				<u>88</u>

Dietary in  
British  
ships.

The chief, if not the only, cause of scurvy is prolonged deprivation of fresh vegetable food. The scales of provisions in the majority of British ships are abundant as to quantity, and probably suit the

taste of English seamen, but they are too uniform and monotonous for the preservation of health. The allowance differs little, except in quality, from the dietary in use during the last century, and this notwithstanding the great improvements in the preservation of meats and vegetables. Good preserved meat should be issued to the merchant seaman at least once a week. Preserved vegetables should be given still oftener. Greater care should be taken to procure sufficient supplies of potatoes and other vegetables. Where practicable, an occasional issue of beer or cheap light wine, antiscorbutics of great value, has been highly recommended. Above all, especial attention should be paid to the regular daily issue at dinner of good lemonade, which is unquestionably the best preventive of scurvy, as it is also the most efficient remedy. These suggestions are derived from the report of Dr. Walter Dickson, R.N., to the Registrar-General of Seamen.

Scurvy is frequently caused by the excesses in which the men indulge when on shore. Men joining a ship at Calcutta will in many cases suffer from this disease, while other members of the crew, who had been on board the same ship much longer, will escape. Scurvy in these cases never makes its appearance till the ship reaches a cold climate, generally off the Western Isles. Very bad cases of scurvy require quite two months' treatment.

Scurvy caused by excess.

The Secretary to the Seamen's Hospital Society informed Admiral Ryder's Committee that scurvy was almost unknown in a French or Dutch ship, their fortunate immunity from the disease being attributed to the superiority of their dietary.

More varied dietary in French ships.

Admiral Ryder's Committee recommended the following scale of rations as generally suitable for all voyages:—

Scale recommended by Admiral Ryder.

*Scale of Rations.*

	Bread	Beef	Pork	Flour	Peas	Tea	Coffee or Cocoa	Sugar	Water	Suet	Raisins	Preserved Potatoes <sup>1</sup>	Preserved Meat	Pickles	Mustard	Lamp Oil
	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	pt.	oz.	oz.	ozs.	qts.	oz.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	pt.	oz.	
Sunday	1	1	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	1	2	4	8	—	—	
Monday	1	—	$1\frac{1}{4}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Tuesday	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	1	2	—	—	—	—	
Wednesday	1	—	$1\frac{1}{4}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Thursday	1	1	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	1	2	4	8	—	—	
Friday	1	—	$1\frac{1}{4}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	—	—	—	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	
Saturday	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	12	3	1	2	—	—	—	—	1 pt. per lamp per week.

<sup>1</sup> One pint extra water for cooking potatoes on Sundays, and another on Thursdays.



$\frac{1}{2}$  an ounce of coffee or cocoa and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an ounce of sugar at daylight, to all hands in port, and the watch on deck at sea; crew to find water.

$\frac{1}{2}$  pint of vinegar, as by the existing Act of Parliament, but the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. allowances of lime-juice and sugar should be doubled.

No grog allowed, except as an extra, which may be stopped as a punishment, but if issued, the maximum to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  gill of rum daily at sea; 1 ditto in port.

#### *Substitutes.*

$\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of coffee, or cocoa, or chocolate may be substituted for  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of tea; molasses for sugar, the quantity to be one-half more; 1 lb. of potatoes or yams,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of flour or rice,  $\frac{1}{3}$  pint of peas, or  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint of barley may be substituted for each other. Beef and pork may be substituted for each other.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of butter may be issued in lieu of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of meat by mutual agreement. 4 ozs. of preserved potatoes, 3 ozs. of compressed vegetables, 8 ozs. of preserved vegetables, or 8 ozs. of common potatoes, kept, if need be, in molasses or vinegar, may be substituted for each other. 4 ozs. of apples or other dried fruit may be substituted for 2 ozs. of raisins.

When fresh meat is issued, the proportion shall be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. per man per day in lieu of salt meat; potatoes or yams as above, in lieu of flour and peas; green vegetables for soup, with flour, rice, &c., to thicken it. When in port the best antiscorbutics are watercresses, radishes, onions, and potatoes, with limes, lemons, oranges, shaddocks, and other fruits.

When the allowance of meat shrinks in boiling below half its supposed original weight, an extra half-ration should be issued.

Candles may be substituted for oil.

They proposed that the adoption of an adequate scale of fresh provisions should be enforced by a penalty:—

‘Scurvy being absolutely preventable by a sufficient supply of vegetables or lime-juice in the case of all men who have not contracted the seeds of complaint before joining the ship, any seaman suffering therefrom should have power under the certificate of a qualified medical man to sue the owners or master of the ship in which it is proved he contracted the disease for continuance of wages until he is declared cured, or for a period certified by a qualified medical practitioner as the probable interval before cure, the maximum amount, however, not to exceed three months’ wages.

A good dietary involves little additional expense.

‘The adoption of these recommendations would not involve the shipowner in a serious expense. A sufficient supply of the very best lime-juice for an ordinary voyage to India and back need not cost more than 3s. to 4s. per man. A further expenditure of from 1l. to 2l. per head for the other articles suggested, in addition to the present abundant salt rations, would secure for the crew a diet so varied and wholesome that scurvy would become as unknown as it has been for eighty years in the Royal Navy, or in the better class of merchant ships. The very perfection, it is said, which has been attained in preserving articles for the table has acted injuriously upon the provisioning of the crews. Ships do not now, as formerly

touch at the Cape or St. Helena to procure fresh supplies for the passengers.

The Act of 1867 was introduced because complaints had arisen of the prevalence of scurvy; and numerous investigations having been held by the Board of Trade, the Duke of Richmond thought it necessary to make provision for the inspection and safe custody of the lime-juice or other antiscorbutics, and for the serving out the same to the crews. It is evident, from the results of Dr. Roe's extensive experience, that the humane intentions of the Legislature have been in many cases frustrated; and this example is one of many which may be adduced to show the impossibility of securing to the seamen, by minute Government inspection, all the comforts or the security of which the necessary conditions of a life at sea admit.

To the neglect to provide a proper scale of provisions we must attribute the higher death-rate in the merchant service as compared with the Royal Navy. In the ten years terminating in 1867 the deaths in Her Majesty's ships had been 15 per 1,000, whereas the deaths in the merchant service had been 24 per 1,000.

Seamen appreciate good treatment even more, or at least as much, as a superior rate of wages. Mr. MacIver told the Unseaworthy Ships Commission that in the Cunard Company the wages were kept at 4*l.* a month, while other companies gave 4*l.* 10*s.* or 5*l.* 'The men,' he said, 'came to us, because they value the treatment more than the pay, and they are better treated in the Cunard Service.'

It has been perhaps needlessly repeated in these pages, that no observations, whether relating to the pay, dietary, and accommodation provided for seamen, or to their character and skill, are of universal application. In the mercantile marine there are infinite gradations between the highest and the lowest extremities of the scale. As in their course in Parliament in dealing with shipping legislation, so in their conduct out of doors, the good shipowners, who are the many, appear to independent observers to pursue an unwise policy in endeavouring to cast a shield over the malpractices of a minority of the trade, who are needy or niggardly, or reckless in the management of their business. The public does not confound the good and the bad together, and it is neither just nor necessary that those who honestly do their duty should seek to conceal or palliate the conduct of shipowners who cannot be trusted to do what is right without the control or the compulsion of legislation.

As an illustration I would refer to a speech delivered by Mr. Duncan, a most respected member of the shipping trade, himself an

Seamen  
appreciate  
good treat-  
ment.

Conditions  
vary  
widely in  
different  
employers.

old sailor, a member of the Royal Commission, and chairman of the London Shipowners' Association. That he is the owner of ships of the finest class, and that his arrangements for the comfort of seamen are conceived in the most liberal spirit, is perfectly well known. In his speech at the Society of Arts he said: 'One charge which had cut him to the quick was the statement that seamen were not properly fed. He did not care what was said about their being hard-worked sometimes; seamen must take their chance of that; but he should feel much hurt if any man in his employ came home and said he had not had enough to eat. In his own case he felt that no such charge could be substantiated.' He proceeded to compare the dietary in the Navy and in the merchant ships. 'While the Queen allowed 1 lb. of beef, a private owner gave  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb., and as against  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of sugar they gave  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. Again, in the steam trade to the North of Europe and to India, with which Mr. Norwood is connected, the cost of feeding a sailor averaged, according to his calculations, in most ships from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. a day. Some months ago he had made a close estimate of the cost of provisioning his own steamers, and found it had risen, in five years, from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. per diem. An eminent owner in London, who owned both trading and steam vessels, stated in a letter which he had in his hand that the average cost throughout his ships was 1s. 8d. per seaman. He found on investigation that the cost of wages and food to his crews in the Mediterranean and Indian trades had advanced, within the last five years, from 20 to 25 per cent. With regard to the food supplied on board respectable ships he had the articles of agreement before him. In the collier trade there was practically no restriction on the consumption of meat, as much as 2 lbs. of beef per man being consumed, and the lowest scale in respectable ships, rarely strictly adhered to, was  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of pork, or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of beef per day. If butter was given, only 1 lb. of meat was allowed. He feared the agricultural labourer on his 12s. per week, and a little bacon on Sundays, would consider it a great treat if he had the opportunity of messing with an A.B. on board ship in fine weather, and with a calm sea.'

In some steamers, running to the Baltic, the men find themselves, and are paid 30s. a week; but when the seamen have an allowance of money in lieu of provisions it is unnecessary to say that their dietary is much less ample than respectable shipowners usually provide. In many cases it is certain that they do not provide themselves with sufficient food. My experience as a yacht owner confirms the opinion of Mr. Norwood. Our men are paid 25s. to 27s. a week, and so anxious are they to economise, that, when bound to the



Mediterranean, they lay in a stock of provisions in England for the whole of the voyage. Their fare consists of biscuit, bacon, and dried peas, and that, too, even when in port where fresh provisions may be obtained in abundance, and at a smaller cost than the unwholesome supplies brought from England. They prefer, however, to make themselves independent of local supplies, and thus to ensure that their expenses shall not exceed a certain limit.

It may be assumed that the arrangements detailed by Messrs. Norwood and Duncan represent the practice of the best shipowners, but it was clearly shown by Captain Toynbee that in other cases the dietary was less liberal. On applying to a leading firm of provision merchants in London he had ascertained that there were ships in which the captain and officers were victualled for 1s. 5d. a day, and the crews at 10½d. a day, the provisions being inferior and without variety.

Mr. Duncan referred to the space necessary for the accommodation of the crew. He said that in his ships the men had more than two tons measurement each, and that was not more in his belief than it was usual to allow. It would not appear, however, that so ample a space is universally allotted, for we read in the Consular Report from Pernambuco that the accommodation provided for the crews on board ships is generally bad, and would not be tolerated for the criminals in our penitentiary establishments.

Crew  
spaces.

As in the allowance of space so in the supply of food. It is the poor shipowners, and not the men of capital, who, as a rule, make insufficient provision for the comfort of their crews—

Their poverty and not their will consents.

So, indeed, it must ever be. The seamen employed in small ships, in a comparatively unremunerative trade, have always fared miserably.

Before the great ocean steamers were in existence seamen no doubt were better cared for in one of the East India Company's ships than in a fruiterer running to St. Michael's. The description given by Consul Hunt of the state of things in the trade with the Azores in 1847 applies equally to other small traders at the present day:—

'Small ships are generally the property of persons of limited capital, to whom the expense of fitting them out for a foreign voyage, including the advance of a month's wages to each of the crew, is a work of considerable difficulty. It is, therefore, incumbent on them to save where they may; and as economy cannot, for the insurance sake, fall on the apparel, nor will be allowed by the seamen engaged in the reduction of their advance, it is practised in the

purchase of provisions. A certain passage, and not a long one, is calculated on; the owner knows that his master on arrival at the foreign port can obtain money on account of his freight home, and that provisions will be cheaper there, and he therefore gives no larger supply of food than is necessary, in his view, for the passage. This is stated with reference to ships of less than 60 tons burthen, for which stores cannot be bought out of bond. The consequence is, that, with an ordinarily long passage, the stores are exhausted either on or before arrival; and if the ship be dismasted, the crew are exposed to the horrors of starvation, with no cause for such a calamity but an improvident supply of food at the beginning of the voyage.

‘The same motives send small ships to sea without a sufficient medicine-chest; or, in many cases where one has been provided, the master will not serve medicine to a sick seaman. A slight attack of illness left without treatment becomes one of aggravated symptoms; the man on his arrival is discharged dangerously ill into the care of his Consul; a long course of treatment becomes necessary, and the Government is called on to pay a sum of between five and ten pounds for the relief so afforded. And here it must be observed that a common cause of this illness is want of clothing, and the consequent undue exposure to wet and cold, with deficient protection in the fore-castle from the water coming over a vessel’s bows.’

Liverpool  
Committee.

The Liverpool Committee, with the hearty support of the more respectable seamen’s lodging-house keepers, recommended that sailors’ boarding-houses should be licensed and under inspection, and a provision for the issue of such licences has been made in the Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act of 1880.

Consul  
Lever,  
Trieste.

Consul Charles Lever, of Trieste, has also made a suggestion that Sailors’ Homes should be established at the principal foreign ports. The utter destitution of a British seaman on landing at a foreign port is positively pitiable. ‘He is rarely,’ says Mr. Lever, ‘much of a linguist, and is of necessity thrown upon the haunts of vice, where alone a little of his language is spoken, and which are the resort of persons only too well known to the police of the Continent.’

Consul  
Bernal,  
Havre.

Consul Bernal, of Havre, expresses a wish that some of the large amount of money collected so freely in England for foreign objects of charity could be devoted to the welfare of British seamen at home and abroad. He complains that even owners and masters are disinclined to assist the institutions established at Havre for preserving the men from the temptations to which they are especially exposed at that port. In his latest report (1883) the Consul writes as follows:—

‘After three years’ unwearied exertions my wife, aided by Mrs.

Hanmer Griffith, of Clifton, succeeded in raising here and in England sufficient money to start a "Sailors' Home," with accommodation for between forty and fifty men, and the opening took place two weeks ago. Only those who, like myself, know the constant cases which occur of our sailors being robbed of their hard-earned wages can tell what a protection such an institution will be to them if they will but make use of it, and it is to be hoped that shipowners having vessels coming here will not refuse to give a small donation to its support.'

The Board of Trade have of late displayed greatly increased activity in the pursuit of runners from the low lodgings, who are habitually engaged in robbing ships of their crews. In London a staff of police is now employed upon the River, whose duty it is to board homeward-bound vessels, for the purpose of ejecting these touters. The success of this measure has been complete. In the first six months of 1868, out of 406 vessels boarded by the Board of Trade officers crimps were found in 130 cases. In the corresponding period of 1874, of 503 vessels boarded there were four vessels with crimps on board, and the results obtained since that time have been equally satisfactory.

New regulations in London

A noble effort has of late been undertaken by the combined resources of the State and private individuals to provide improved dwellings for the working classes. The urgent necessity for improvement in the dwellings of married seamen was pointed out ten years ago by Admiral Ryder's Committee. They recommended that an attempt should be made to build lodging-houses for sailors' wives and families, affording decent accommodation at a low rent. One good room was thought sufficient for a seaman's family, from whom the husband was absent for lengthened periods, and where no child exceeded seven years of age. Such room ought to be provided for a rent of 2s. a week. The well-known Familistery, at Guise, in Normandy, where buildings have been put up in a quadrangular form, with a large interior court covered with a glass roof, was suggested as a model for imitation. The arrangement secures a place of recreation for children in all weathers, and a shelter, where music and social gatherings can be held, in which the workmen and their wives and families may participate. It would be an invaluable boon to seamen residing in great ports such as London and Liverpool, if dwellings of the kind recommended could be erected for their occupation. It is earnestly to be hoped that shipowners will be induced to take up the suggestion, and there is reason to believe that the money laid out would bring a reasonable return to those who furnish the necessary funds.

Dwellings for seamen.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## UNDERMANNING.

Reduction  
of crews.

A REDUCTION in the number of seamen in proportion to tonnage has no doubt been partly justified by improved mechanical appliances and modifications in the types and dimensions of ships.

It is mainly owing to the increase in the tonnage of individual ships, and the development of steam, that the number of seamen employed has not increased *pari passu* with the augmentation in the aggregate tonnage of our mercantile marine.

*Nautical  
Magazine.*

The following remarks are copied from an article in the *Nautical Magazine*, commenting on statistics published by the Board of Trade :—

‘Taken in the aggregate, the figures in this table show that whereas 4·36 men were carried to each 100 tons in 1854, only 3·52 men were carried in 1873. The table distinguishes sailing from steam ships, and, of course, the falling-off is much greater in the latter than in the former class of vessel, the decrease in the case of steamships being no less than 2·23 to each 100 tons. Indeed, in the case of sailing ships engaged in the home trade, there is a slight increase, 5·28 men being carried in 1873, as against 4·97 in 1854; and in sailing ships engaged in the foreign trade there is a decrease of only 1·28 men per 100 tons. Judging from these figures it does not appear that there is much ground for the statements that are sometimes made to the effect that ships are undermanned in the present day as compared with formerly. The improvements which have been made in the rigging and general equipment of sailing vessels during the last twenty years are more than sufficient to account for the small decrease which has taken place in their crews. Of course, it is only in the larger class of vessel that these improvements have been introduced to any appreciable extent. Small coasters are fitted much in the same style now as they were twenty years since; nor could the mechanical appliances for economising

labour that are to be found on board every foreign-going vessel of heavy tonnage be turned to profitable account in their case.

‘It is in steamers engaged in the foreign trade that the greatest reduction in the proportion of men per 100 tons is to be found. Whereas 7·69 men were carried in 1854, only 3·97 men were carried in 1873, thus showing a decrease of 3·72 men, or nearly 50 per cent.’

Mr. Jewla, of Lloyd’s, has called attention to this question in his pamphlets and in several able communications to the daily press. An interesting paper published by him in 1873 contained some striking figures.

Mr. Jewla’s statistics.

The reduction in the size of sailing vessels engaged in the home trade, the increase in size in both the other divisions, and the reduction in the number of men to every hundred tons, both in sailing vessels and steamers, are equally noteworthy.

The process of reduction in the number of hands began many years ago. Mr. Smith, a witness before Lord Ellenborough’s Commission, stated that the proportion to the 100 tons of men sailing out of the North-eastern ports was a great deal less in 1848 than it had been twenty-five years before. In the interval he was of opinion that the crews had been reduced by at least one-third; and that at the date at which he was speaking three men and a boy were considered a sufficient complement for every 100 tons of shipping.

Reduction of crews began long ago.

Fifteen years ago Sir Bartholomew Sullivan spoke of the alterations that were taking place in the form and rigging of our merchant ships as tending to diminish the number of seamen whom it was necessary to carry. ‘A long, narrow ship,’ he said, ‘is not masted in proportion to her tonnage in as large a degree as the old class of ships were; so that a ship with four men per 100 tons is as well manned at least as an old-class ship would be with five. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that in too many instances the crews have been recklessly and unjustifiably diminished.’

Sir Bartholomew Sullivan.

The Commission on Unseaworthy Ships received important evidence on the subject of undermanning from Mr. Charles MacIver. For many years he has passed the winter months at Malta, where he has had ample opportunity of observing, with a critical and experienced eye, the whole British steam trade with the Black Sea, Egypt, and the East. The following are some extracts from his evidence:—

Mr. C. MacIver.

‘Another point to which I wish to call attention is the question of manning. As regards those deeply-loaded vessels which I allude to, I have an impression—and it is more than an impression—that

they are not manned in the way they ought to be. I saw a British steamer with a cargo of grain of 1,200 tons, and she had only six deck hands, including the boatswain. I believe many collisions are caused by the undermanning of vessels; in other words, the men are called off the watch to do things which they have no business to do at that time. And another thing is this: a man, when he sails in a foreign-going ship, has a right to expect his full allowance of sleep undisturbed. I have no right to call that man up and break his sleep, unless it is for something out of the common. That is not the rule with some shipowners; they think they have a perfect right to call Jack up whenever they like. It is part of the business of his life to go to sleep; but some owners send their vessels to sea with so few hands that on the most ordinary occasions he is called up to help the rest of the hands.'

How can I, then, return in happy flight,  
That am debarred the benefit of rest?  
When day's oppression is not eased by night,  
But day by night, and night by day oppressed?

Mr. Jeula.

Mr. Jeula strongly corroborates the views of Mr. MacIver. 'When serious casualties are reported, the remark is frequently made, "Undermanned, no doubt." Whether this be so, looking at the development of mechanical appliances and increase in the size of vessels, I am unable to say; but the circumstance that, during the year 1870 no less than 1,788 sailing vessels and 502 steamers, making together 2,290 vessels, or more than six for every day in the year, were reported in *Lloyd's List* as having been in collision; and the fact that while in the year 1850 the number of men employed for every 100 tons in sailing ships was  $4\frac{3}{4}$  men nearly, and in steamers  $8\frac{1}{2}$  men, 20 years afterwards, in 1870, the number was only  $3\frac{1}{4}$  men in sailing vessels and only  $4\frac{2}{3}$  in steamers, or a reduction nearly equal to one in three men in sailing ships, and to one in two men in steam vessels, will be sufficient apology for drawing attention to the subject.'

Letter to  
*Shipping*  
*Gazette.*

A nautical writer, in a letter addressed to the editor of the *Shipping Gazette* in April 1873, gives a detailed and practical illustration of the difficulties which officers have to surmount in handling merchant ships with insufficient crews:--

'It is most disgraceful that ships are sent to sea so much undermanned, and we are at liberty to do even with less. For instance, my present command, ship 1,100 tons register, may leave the port of London with ten seamen only on her articles of agreement. Of



course we have more; but the law does not bind us to it. I will show you how our ships are manned, also how they should be. We have ample proof of the insufficiency as it is in every gale that passes over the British Islands, bringing sad news of shipwreck and loss of life. There is no lack of confirmation of the cause in those that just escape and get back to anchorage with crews worn out, and refusing to go to sea, unless more men are engaged. Here, as in the loading, the Board of Trade should have full power to act, and insist that the vessel shall carry as many seamen for her safe navigation as if she was under Government contract. Why should it be necessary to increase the crew by one-fourth for the one service when the same dangers and risks have to be encountered by all, irrespective of the nature of their employment? Exercise common prudence and man our ships for emergencies. The expense incurred will be more than made up in the saving of life from shipwreck; and when we decrease the risk, the insurance premium will also be proportionately reduced. I give an example of the present rate of manning our merchant ships and what it should be:—

*Ship (say 1,000 tons register).*

<i>As it is:—</i>		<i>As it should be:—</i>	
Master . . . . .	1	Master . . . . .	1
First Officer . . . . .	1	First Officer . . . . .	1
Second Officer . . . . .	1	Second Officer . . . . .	1
Steward . . . . .	1	Steward . . . . .	1
Cook . . . . .	1	Cook . . . . .	1
Boatswain . . . . .	1	Boatswain . . . . .	1
Carpenter . . . . .	1	Carpenter . . . . .	1
Engineer . . . . .	1	Engineer . . . . .	1
Apprentices . . . . .	2	Apprentices . . . . .	4
O.S. . . . .	2	O.S. . . . .	2
A.B.'s . . . . .	14	A.B.'s . . . . .	20
All told . . . . .	26	All told . . . . .	34

‘To put the existing system into practice we will send the ship to sea thus manned. Suppose pilot left the ship all plain sail set and the decks cleared up, orders given to set the watches:—

<i>Starboard Watch.</i>		<i>Port Watch.</i>	
Second Officer in charge . . . . .	1	First Officer in charge . . . . .	1
Apprentice . . . . .	1	Apprentice . . . . .	1
O.S. . . . .	1	O.S. . . . .	1
A.B.'s . . . . .	7	A.B.'s . . . . .	7
Men . . . . .	10	Men . . . . .	10

‘These ten men show the usual numbers on board a merchant

ship of 1,000 tons keeping watch at sea. Supposing that all are well out of that number, we must have one man at the wheel and one on the look-out, reducing our staff to eight men, including officer of the watch. Now to use our forces practically. Weather gets suddenly dirty with increasing breeze. Sail has to be reduced. In royals and topgallant sails, they are clewed up after a hard struggle. Officer of the watch, O.S., and a boy clewing up mizen topgallant sail. Jack at the fore ditto pulling up the clew-lines by inches, whilst the sail is beating about in the fast increasing gale, maintopgallant sail keeping time with the fore, and in its turn clewed up after a round volley of oaths from one or other of our crew, who have not then got quite sober, and have got a month's pay in advance. Sails clewed up, order given to furl all. "Here's another go! We can only manage one royal and topgallant sail at a time, and if a squall strikes the ship while the hands are aloft she must drag through it, or the other thing. Who can help it?"

Number of  
hands re-  
duced in  
some ships.

It has been stated that the reduction in the proportion of seamen required to man our merchant ships is to be explained in part by the alterations in the type and the rigging of our shipping; but the great reduction in the number of seamen may be remarked in the very same ships. In illustration of these observations I may refer to Table No. 24 in the returns relating to merchant shipping, published in April last by the Board of Trade. In these tables the crews are given of thirty-five vessels employed in the years 1870 and 1880:—

*Classification of the Crews of Thirty-five vessels employed in the  
Years 1870 and 1880.*

Year	No. of Vessels	Mates	Midshipmen	Boatswains	Quartermasters	Carpenters	Salvagers	Able Seamen	Ordinary Seamen	Apprentices	Boys	Other Persons	Total Crew	Total Foreigners
1870.	35	66	3	25	—	35	17	404	76	39	17	85	767	117
1880.	35	64	5	22	—	33	21	366	72	37	14	84	718	159

In his evidence before the Commission the late Captain Furnell, one of Mr. Green's old commanders, and afterwards a shipping master in the port of London, stated that he had 35 able seamen in the ship which he commanded. The same vessel, with the same masts and yards, and with nothing to reduce the manual labour, went to sea with nine men on board. She went to Quebec in the winter, and arrived safely.

We have next to consider whether any practicable legislation can be proposed for the prevention of undermanning. Here we are at once brought face to face with the risks of foreign competition. Limited as are the crews of our own merchantmen, it is alleged that still fewer men are carried in the merchant ships of the United States. Mr. Rankin, of Liverpool, informed the Royal Commission that 'the ships registered in the United Kingdom had  $2\frac{1}{4}$  men to the 100 tons, that is, ships of 800 tons and upwards. The foreign ships came next. They had two men to the 100 tons. Next came the colonial ships, which had 1.78 men to the 100 tons; and lastly there came the United States ships, which averaged 1.77 men to the 100 tons.' It is to be observed that many American vessels are rigged in a fashion which makes it possible to reduce the crews to a minimum number without imposing any unreasonable labour on the men.

United States ships carry still fewer hands.

The following is the section relating to the manning of emigrant ships contained in the Passenger Act of 1855, the 18th and 19th of Victoria, c. 119, s. 28:—'In case of non-compliance with any of the requirements of this section, the master of the ship shall for each offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds; provided that if the emigration officer shall consider the crew inefficient, and the owner or charterer of the ship shall thereupon appeal in writing to the said Emigration Commissioners (Board of Trade), such commissioners (Board) shall, at the expense of the appellant, appoint two other emigration officers, or two competent persons, to examine into the matter, and the unanimous opinion of the persons so appointed, expressed under their hands, shall be conclusive on the point.'

Regulations of Passenger Act.

Seamen have under the existing laws a right to complain if a ship for which they have been engaged is in their opinion undermanned. It is the duty of the Board of Trade in case such complaints are made to appoint competent persons to inquire; and if the crew can be shown to have been insufficient, the seamen are released from their engagement. It seems impossible to carry the legislative remedy further. It is for the shipowners to avail themselves of the practical experience of their captains, and to supply ungrudgingly the labour required for properly manning their ships. Those who fall short of their duty in this regard deserve to be punished, and the law affords the means of redress whenever it is found that a just cause of complaint exists.

Seamen have a right to complain of undermanning.

Another aspect of the case deserves consideration. If seamanship had decayed as much as it has been supposed, would it have been possible to make continuous reductions in the number of hands



Reduced  
crews no  
proof of  
deteriora-  
tion.

required to navigate the ships? The proportion of men to 100 tons in sailing ships engaged in the foreign trade has fallen from 3·97 in 1854 to 2·79 in 1870, and to 2·24 in 1880; and this reduction has not been confined to the most modern type of vessels.

Notwithstanding the reduction of the crews, our ships make as good passages as heretofore across the ocean. It is difficult in the presence of facts like these to give full credence to the disparaging statements respecting the character of our seamen of late so freely circulated.

Ships  
under-  
officered.

Captain  
Moriarty

These criticisms on seamen in certain ships apply with far greater force to the officers who succeed one another in charge of the watches. In many merchant ships the number is not sufficient to give that necessary rest, without which an anxious and sometimes hazardous duty cannot be properly performed. Such at least is the opinion of Captain Moriarty. Writing in November to the editor of the *Nautical Magazine*, he says:—‘I maintain it to be quite impossible for any man to keep every alternate watch (four hours on deck and four below, liable to interruptions) during many consecutive nights without feeling his brain overtaxed and muddled. He may give his bodily presence on deck from 8 P.M. till midnight, and from 4 till 8 A.M. He may be perfectly sober and not asleep, yet not possessing the same clearness of intellect which the same person would display when in the enjoyment of a natural amount of rest. In a moderate-sized ship the captain has sufficient occupation in navigating her and executing various duties. Being liable to call at all times, he cannot be expected to keep a regular watch himself. Hence, it appears most desirable for the safety of the ship that the officers, as regular watch-keepers, should never be in less than three watches. They might then be expected to bring clear eyes and intellects on deck with them ready to act promptly in any emergency. These remarks do not apply to the men, who are allowed to lie down when the watch is not employed.’

## CHAPTER XX.

## CERTIFICATES TO ABLE SEAMEN.

AMONG the many plans for the improvement of the seamen, the introduction of a test by examination seems to be one of the most practicable, and the best calculated to give encouragement to seamanlike skill and conduct. It has been shown elsewhere what excellent results have attended the compulsory examination of officers. It is presumable, therefore, that equally beneficial consequences may be anticipated from the application of a similar test in the case of seamen.

Examina-  
tions of  
officers  
successful.

The present system of shipping crews would work far more satisfactorily both for shipowners and shipmasters, if greater strictness were observed in giving certificates of discharge. It is too common a practice to give the highest certificates of conduct to seamen who are wholly undeserving of a favourable recommendation to the captain of another ship. It is easy to understand that captains on their arrival in port, after a long voyage, are anxious to avoid disagreeable altercations. The misdeeds of an individual are forgotten the more readily when his officer is registering an inward vow that he will never allow himself to be troubled with the same offender again. Such laxity is, however, extremely reprehensible, and it has been severely criticised by several of the consuls. Consul Bernal, at Havre, re-echoes the views expressed by very many of his colleagues, when he says, 'It is surprising how few captains have the moral courage to refuse good characters to those who are unworthy of them; and yet the evils, and even danger, of not doing so are patent to everyone.'

V.G. given  
too easily.

The Board of Trade have sought to bring home to the minds of the shipmasters the necessity of greater strictness in the characters given to seamen on their discharge. A circular has been issued to the superintendents of the shipping offices, who have been instructed to decline to sign the form of discharge when the certificates of character, given by masters to seamen, are distinctly inconsistent with

Board of  
Trade Cir-  
cular.

the entries in the official log-books; and they are to report the case to the Board of Trade, who may, if they think fit, institute proceedings against the master. Under Section 176 of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 a master may be punished for a misdemeanour if he is found guilty of giving a false character to a seaman.

Board of  
Trade ap-  
prehend  
examina-  
tion for  
A.B. would  
be un-  
popular.

The introduction of certificates of competency as A.B. to seamen has been objected to, on the ground of the alleged impracticability and unpopularity of the proposal. Mr. Farrer informed the Duke of Somerset's commission that 'the proposal to give a certificate of competency as A.B. was very carefully considered by the members representing the seaports, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Messrs. Gray, Mayo, and himself, and they could not see how it could be done. They could not institute an examination for a seaman. They could not make the Government responsible for his competency, and for the fact of his previous service; and they thought that any attempt to do so would be illusory.' If, however, the validity of Mr. Farrer's argument against the examination of seamen is accepted, it applies with equal force to the examinations which the officers of the merchant service are called upon to undergo. If it is wrong that the Government should certify to the competency of the seamen, *à fortiori* is it wrong to grant certificates by examination to their officers. Yet this has been done for years, and, as it is universally admitted, with the most satisfactory results.

Different  
thing from  
Register  
Ticket.

The certificate of A.B. is a different thing from the old register ticket, which was unpopular with seamen, which had the effect of making them prefer service under a foreign flag, and was consequently abolished in 1853. The register ticket, however, was merely a kind of passport which conferred no advantages on the seaman, but which was viewed as an instrument for facilitating the operations of the pressgang in time of war. The certificate of A.B. is here proposed with a very different object. It is designed to benefit both the seaman and the employer. This will plainly appear upon an attentive examination of the arguments, by which the Liverpool Committee of Shipowners, in their first report, recommended the introduction of a test of the efficiency of seamen.

Liverpool  
Committee.

In urging that seamen before being rated as A.B. should obtain a certificate of competency, the Liverpool Committee observed: 'The necessity for this is very apparent from the evidence of the returns. Men often obtain A.B. rating after one or two voyages, though they are incompetent to perform the most ordinary duties of a sailor. Many masters state that out of crews of twenty and twenty-five, not more than three or four know the compass, can steer, heave the



lead, or perform any other of the duties of the seaman. The easy attainment of an A.B. rating almost tends to discourage youths from going through any regular apprenticeship; the consequence is the profession gets degraded, and respectable parents do not allow their boys to follow a sea life.'

By the plan they suggest it is believed a higher rate of wages will be obtained by a certificated A.B., and that thus it will become an object of ambition to sailors to obtain such a certificate. 'The committee do not propose to deprive men, now rating as A.B., however incompetent, of their certificates, but that after the Bill becomes law all men should pass an examination as to competency, such competency to consist of satisfactory proof of at least three years' service as ordinary seaman, provided they are not under twenty years of age; or of a full apprenticeship, say of four years; or of apprenticeship in Government training-ships, and a two years' sea service. A further test is proposed by a few very simple and practical questions. For the protection of certificated men any seaman calling himself A.B. without having a certificate is to be subject to certain penalties.'

The committee renewed their recommendation in their appendix to their first report, published in 1871; but they proposed to dispense with examination, the only test required being a certificate of service at sea.

The Liverpool Shipowners' Association in their last report gave their support to the proposal of the general committee of 1871, and recommended that a seaman, before being rated as A.B., should show satisfactory proof of at least four years' service at sea. This proposal was adopted by Parliament, and is now embodied in Section 7 of the Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act, 1880.

The difficulty of testing the qualifications of a seaman by means of an examination has, in my belief, been exaggerated. It is applied daily in the case of candidates for the Naval Reserve. It was advocated strongly before the Manning Commission by the shipping masters, who were the most competent witnesses upon this particular subject. One of the shipping masters, Mr. Lambton, thus explained in detail the course of procedure he would recommend for testing the qualifications of a seaman. 'I would introduce,' he said, 'a certificate which the seaman would value, as an able seaman's certificate of competency. In the first place this would have to be done on the production of his discharge from his last ship, proving that he was an able seaman. I would also issue a similar document to all ordinary seamen. No person should have one of these certificates until they had served an apprenticeship for three or four

Four years' sea service now required.

Difficulty of examining seamen exaggerated.

years, and could produce their indentures, with a certificate from their employers that they were qualified to fulfil the duties of an able or other seaman.' When asked whether such a certificate would be valued, Mr. Lambton replied, 'Yes; all our seamen felt quite delighted when I told them that I would like to see such a scheme introduced into the service.'

Ratings in  
Navy.

The numerous gradations of ratings and of pay in the Navy are a sufficient proof of the necessity of stimulating exertion by distinguishing badges or the hope of pecuniary reward.

Appreciating the force of these considerations, the Manning Committee of 1853 recommended in their report, in accordance with the advice of Sir Byam Martin, that a superior class of A.B. should be established, with a higher rate of pay. The number of men to be so rated was to be 20 per cent. of the total number of blue-jackets. They were to be designated 'leading seamen,' to consist of men who are thorough helm and leadsmen, and practical riggers, capable of doing duty as such in any part of a ship. They were to undergo an examination for the rating conducted by competent officers, to wear a star as a badge of distinction, and to be exempted from corporal punishment, except by sentence of a court-martial or for mutiny.

Crews  
shipped at  
last mo-  
ment.

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t  
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1

The hurried manner in which crews are brought together a short time before the ship is intended to sail makes it the more desirable to establish some means of ascertaining the fitness and ability of seamen before they are entered on the ship's papers.

The tendency to reduce every expense to the minimum, which is the necessary result of keen competition and low profits, has led to the neglect of ordinary precautions in shipping men at the home ports. In other branches, where the efficiency of the hands employed is less essential to the security of life, men are often kept together even in unprosperous times, and when the employers are unable to earn a sufficient sum to cover the expenditure on labour; because it is known that the dispersion of a valuable body of workmen is an impolitic and short-sighted economy. In the shipping trade these considerations are too little regarded. The men are paid off as soon as the ship is secured in dock, and the captains are not allowed to engage their crews until the last moment before their departure on a long voyage. In no other business would it be thought reasonable to expect that good workmen could always be found waiting to be hired in any numbers whenever their services are required.

Liv  
Con

Certificated  
cooks.

It would be only fair to the crews if some certificate of competency were required before a man was allowed to ship as cook.

The culinary processes on many merchant ships are of the rudest description; and the inexperience of the cooks is the more serious in a sanitary point of view, because the dietary is of necessity unnatural. If the food be ill prepared, it must have a most prejudicial effect on the health of the crews.

The A.B. certificate should in the first instance be voluntary.



CHAPTER XXI.<sup>d</sup>

## OFFICERS OF THE MERCHANT SERVICE.

THE training of merchant officers is not likely to excite a deep interest in a wide circle of readers; but if it can be shown that by encouraging some new studies of obvious practical utility, and by providing more educational opportunities for merchant officers, we can raise the status of their profession, secure greater safety of life at sea, and promote the maritime enterprise of the country, any proposal will be recognised as of essential importance to the maritime community.

Former  
character of  
merchant  
officers in  
inferior  
ships.

The too often dissolute character and low professional acquirements of British shipmasters in former days were proverbial, and a serious reproach to the Government and the shipowners of this country. It might have been expected that the glorious victories of Nelson and the band of naval heroes of whom he is only the most renowned, would have had an ennobling influence over the whole national marine. It is certain, however, that no such result ensued.

Murray on  
replies of  
Consuls,  
1843-47.

The Parliamentary publications of the period anterior to the repeal of the Navigation Laws afford ample evidence in support of this assertion; and, circulars having been addressed in 1843, and again in 1847, to Her Majesty's Consuls, asking for their opinions as to the manning of British ships, a paper was prepared by Mr. Murray, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, giving a general summary of the evidence obtained:—'In only three reports,' he says, 'out of 65 is it stated that the condition of British shipping had improved rather than declined; and in those cases it is shown that the nature of the trade in which the vessels are engaged, the fruit trade of Greece, requires that the greatest care should be taken in selecting the best ships.'

'In several reports it is stated that there are honourable exceptions to the unworthy class of masters, thus showing that bad conduct and ignorance is the rule, and intelligence and ability the

exception; but of course it is to be understood that these remarks apply solely to the inferior vessels which frequent foreign ports.

‘Meanwhile the commercial marine of Great Britain is described, in the majority of the reports, as having become so lowered in the estimation of foreigners, that foreign ships are chartered in preference to British vessels. Foreign masters are educated, sober, intelligent men, capable of commanding respect and maintaining discipline on board their ships; and foreign seamen are consequently more orderly. The fact that a good master will make good seamen is repeatedly adverted to.’

In vessels of small tonnage the professional qualifications of the masters were generally of the very humblest order. The state of the merchant service in the fruit trade from the Azores, may be surmised from the following synopsis:—

*Notes on the Qualifications of Shipmasters engaged in the Trade of St. Michael's.*

	Number of Shipmasters commanding Vessels of					Vessels in four years under their command
	Under 40 tons	From 41 to 60	From 61 to 80	From 81 to 100	From 101 to 150	
Of sober habits, and acquainted with the mode of ascertaining longitude . . . . .	1	9	23	21	28	4
Of sober habits, but not acquainted with the mode of ascertaining longitude . . . . .	8	53	11	6	0	5
Of intemperate habits, but acquainted with the mode of ascertaining longitude . . . . .	0	1	1	1	3	0
Of intemperate habits, and not acquainted with the mode of ascertaining longitude . . . . .	1	10	11	2	1	0
191 Shipmasters . . . . .	10	73	46	30	32	—

CONSUL HUNT, St. Michael's.—Nov. 1, 1843.

Happily a marked improvement has since taken place. The improvement may be traced to the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, under which the masters and mates of foreign-going vessels were required to possess certificates of competency from the Board of Trade. The beneficial effects of this legislation were at once exhibited.

Improvement after examinations.

Captain F. W. Beechey informed the Manning Committee of 1852 that under the head of ‘character,’ the certificate of competency

Captain  
F. W.  
Beechey,  
R. N.

afforded a means, which had hitherto been greatly wanted, of punishing masters and mates, by either cancelling or suspending their certificates for periods of time, according to the nature of the offence. Since the formation of Local Marine Boards under the Mercantile Marine Act a great improvement had taken place in the character of masters and mates engaged in foreign service. A better educated class of young men were springing up, as the examination they had to undergo for masters' or mates' certificates in the foreign service was very severe. The law had given the Local Board the power of withdrawing masters' certificates in case of intemperance or general mismanagement.

It has often been remarked that the ignorance displayed by ship-owners of the sea and navigation has been the cause of many maritime disasters. The anxiety, therefore, of inexperienced shipowners must have been greatly relieved when the examinations were established, and the Government undertook to test the qualifications of the officers of the mercantile marine.

Mr.  
Phillipps.

Mr. Phillipps, chairman of the London Shipowners' Association, informed Mr. Lindsay's Committee that 'he had from the first been a strong advocate for ascertaining the fitness of our captains and officers to execute the duties which were assigned to them. He had felt for years that the uninformed shipowners, who were a very numerous class, were open to the danger of employing men unfit for their position, and he had long advocated the desirability of making them undergo a certain examination before they were allowed to take charge of any ship.'

Royal  
Commis-  
sion on Un-  
seaworthy  
Ships.  
Replies of  
Consuls,  
1872.

We have now to consider the most recent information brought together by the Royal Commission on Shipping, and by the Board of Trade.

The following extracts are taken from the Blue Book of 1872:—

Consul George Brackenbury, Lisbon:—'The general condition of British seamen who come under my notice is good, materially; morally it is better than perhaps could be expected, from their own deficient education, and from the bad example too frequently set them by the masters and officers of the smaller class of vessels.'

Consul H. J. Murray, Portland:—'The masters frequently become morose and ill-tempered from being more or less isolated, and often give way to drinking, which soon subverts all discipline on board.'

Consul B. W. Doyle, of Pernambuco:—'The masters of British sailing ships are, as a rule, a proverbial contrast to the masters of ships of most other nations, and it is a wonder, considering the

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disproportion between the remuneration for which British masters work and the valuable property entrusted to them, that the navigation of these vessels and the trade through them is carried on with so much honesty and regularity.'

Consul E. M. Mark, Marseilles:—'The general condition of British seamen is becoming lamentably bad—our sailors are completely demoralised. It is a most serious question, and there are many matters that require immediate attention. First of all the standing of the masters must be considered. England is not fairly represented abroad by the men who command her ships on the ocean; the grossest ignorance is seen; drunkenness largely prevails amongst them; they are reckless and frequently dishonest. British shipowners should try and correct this by a better scale of remuneration to the captains, and by obliging them to hold a share in the vessels, and tempting a better class of men in their service. The British underwriters should also do their insurance business more carefully, and ascertain, as far as possible, in all cases, how British ships are commanded and manned.'

Consul John Morgan, Bahia:—'I do not see any particular feature to note in the general condition of seamen at this port, except their habitual tendency to intoxication, which unfortunately tells against them in obtaining employment; foreigners, as a rule, being always preferred. On the other hand, when the master is a sober man, and acts fairly by his crew, few or no cases of complaint come before me; but if the master is a drunkard, or is harsh, or disregards the comfort of his crew, quarrels and disturbances continually arise, and crimping comes into play, and desertion is the consequence.'

Vice-Consul William Ward, Memel:—'I do not think that the crews of steamers give either more or less trouble than those of sailing ships. As a rule, it will be found that the most trouble is given by crews of vessels commanded by masters of an irritable, of a weak or of a brutal character. A just, firm, and sober master is generally able to manage his crew without applying to the Consul for assistance, excepting in extreme cases.'

The following is an extract from the report of H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul at Santander (Mr. Leopold March) on trade and navigation for the year 1874:—

'It may not perhaps be considered out of place if the subject of drinking amongst British masters and mates is alluded to in this report, several examples of intemperance amongst these classes having presented themselves at Santander. The best way of prevent-

ing the loss of vessels through unseaworthiness, collision, and fire, as well as the improvement of the condition and quality of our seamen, has occupied public and official attention for some time past; but, until a large percentage of shipmasters abandon their intemperate habits, due justice cannot be done to the question, and our mercantile marine will carry a chronic evil in its very heart. This painful fact is apparent in every port frequented by British shipping. Drinking masters are seldom seen incapable in the streets; for, when completely intoxicated, some one is generally at hand to stow the delinquent away until his senses return. Thus, a vice which works incalculable mischief to trade and navigation escapes public attention, although the cases which sometimes come before our courts, and form only a tithe of those not brought to light, indicate the latent danger. There are many shipmasters who go about their business half muddled, and consequently liable to fall into difficulties, especially at foreign ports. Others are never quite sober, but appear so until a sudden strain is put upon their faculties, when they break down at a critical moment, entailing the loss or serious damage of their vessel, and many lives perhaps. The most incorrigible drinkers are to be found amongst the masters and mates of small vessels, including the engineers of steamers trading along the coast and between British and continental ports. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that our Transatlantic and Indian ships are as free as they should be from this vice, in the modified but dangerous and deceitful form described above. If the deep could reveal its terrible secrets, how many missing ships might be accounted for in this manner! How many have been stranded, run on rocks, brought in collision, taken to sea on the eve of stormy weather, the engines out of order in a manner discernible only to professional eyes, the cargo badly stowed, and finally inefficiently commanded in the hour of danger, all through the recklessness, stupidity, and lack of ordinary care produced by dram-drinking and toping amongst the executive officers! Owing to the great numerical superiority of the British mercantile marine, its annual wreck and casualty returns are much heavier than those of other nations; but are they not also too large in proportion?

‘A sober British ship is a fine sight. The master, the finest specimen of his class in the world, the crew, under his beneficial influence, subordinate and clean. Example is a great thing on board ship, particularly in small ones. If the master drinks, his men are generally troublesome, selling their clothes, and getting into prison. If he is brutal and foul-mouthed, as drinking captains usually are, they will be quarrelsome and blasphemous. Several seamen, repri-

manded at Santander for being tipsy on shore, have excused themselves by pleading the example of the master, and his being always out of the ship. Drinking amongst masters, mates, and engineers, is the curse of the British mercantile marine, and the momentous question presents itself whether the vice is not on the increase, and how it can be checked.

‘Santander, June 30, 1875.’

As the result of personal inquiries, I am impressed with a strong conviction of the injurious influence on the discipline of the merchant service which results from the habit of swearing, which too commonly prevails. I was informed by the officer in command of the training-ship ‘Cumberland’ that the boys, having been accustomed to the discipline of the training-ship, were sometimes much irritated by the coarse language and rough treatment they receive when they went to sea in a merchant vessel. Swearing.

On the occasion of a recent visit to Liverpool I went often to the pier-heads, to witness the outward-bound ships going out of dock. It was an opportunity for forming an opinion as to the amount of credibility which attaches to the statements, so often repeated, that seamen are rarely sober when they embark. It happened that by far the larger number who came under my own observation were perfectly capable of doing their duty. What chiefly attracted my attention was the coarse and repulsive demeanour of certain boatswains and petty officers. One instance is vividly present to my recollection. A fine iron ship, of about 1,000 tons register, well found and moderately laden, was delayed nearly half an hour, made fast to the quay-wall on which I stood. During the interval the crew were mustered, and there was afterwards considerable activity on board in hauling the ship out of dock. The boatswain was busily occupied in these operations, and doubtless suffered occasional provocation from the stupidity of two or three men, out of a total of perhaps 30, who were evidently incapacitated from the effects of liquor; but his mode of encouraging the men to exertion, and of administering reproof, was in the highest degree reprehensible. Every other word was an oath; and the manner was even more brutal than the language. When I reflected that the little band of men before me would in a few hours be completely isolated from the world, and that they were to be employed on a long and dreary voyage of 100 days or more under the orders of such a taskmaster, I could not but feel touched with sympathy for the crew. When such a man is selected from among his messmates in the fore-castle for a



favoured and important post, the effect on his subordinates must be most demoralising.

The subject is worthy the attention of the Legislature. It is a prominent topic in several Consular reports.

Mr. Yeats Brown, our Consul at Genoa, alludes to it in the following remarks:—

‘The habitual use of indecent and bad language, still common on board British vessels, certainly tends to brutalise our crews; and serious disturbances often occur simply through the inveterate habit of both men and officers using ugly adjectives and appellatives.’

Mr. John Morgan, the Consul at Bahia, writes to the same effect, and proposes a legislative remedy:—

‘If Consuls were authorised or enjoined by any new Act to be passed to place upon record an endorsement on the ship’s articles on the conduct of a master of a British ship while in port, it would be a great check on their conduct, and would serve, as a step in advance, in regenerating a class which, in public opinion abroad, saving many honourable exceptions, are far behind the Germans, Swedes, Danes, and Americans in education and general comportment. The crews of steamships are commonly picked men, and give no trouble; and they are also better treated, being commanded by a superior class of commanders.’

Careless  
navigation.

While, as the reports of the Consuls testify, the moral conduct of a certain number of our shipmasters in foreign ports is far from creditable, there is reason to believe that the navigation of British ships is too often careless and inaccurate. Occasional failure is inevitable in any work which is dependent on the fallible judgment of man and his unflagging attention to duty: but we are surely not too sanguine in the expectation we entertain that, if officers of higher professional qualifications were employed, there would be a considerable diminution in the proportion of wrecks attributable to incapacity and neglect.

The *Wreck Register* for the last six years gives the following statistics:—

*Casualties (excluding collisions) to British vessels abroad.*

Total losses:—					Gross Totals	Cases due to error, &c., of masters, officers, or crew
1876-77	.	.	.	.	764	82
1877-78	.	.	.	.	588	98
1878-79	.	.	.	.	672	109
1879-80	.	.	.	.	649	114
1880-81	.	.	.	.	677	97
1881-82	.	.	.	.	761	95

*Casualties (excluding collisions) to British vessels abroad.—continued.*

					Gross Totals	Cases due to error, &c., of masters, officers, or crew
<i>Serious casualties:—</i>						
1876-77	.	.	.	.	1,226	60
1877-78	.	.	.	.	899	59
1878-79	.	.	.	.	881	62
1879-80	.	.	.	.	872	53
1880-81	.	.	.	.	830	50
1881-82	.	.	.	.	887	51
<i>Minor casualties:—</i>						
1876-77	.	.	.	.	1,448	46
1877-78	.	.	.	.	1,313	58
1878-79	.	.	.	.	1,572	64
1879-80	.	.	.	.	1,162	49
1880-81	.	.	.	.	1,539	56
1881-82	.	.	.	.	1,571	75

*Casualties (excluding collisions) to British vessels, on or near the coasts of the United Kingdom.*

					Gross Totals	Cases due to error, &c., of masters, officers, or crew
<i>Total losses:—</i>						
1876-77	.	.	.	.	315	52
1877-78	.	.	.	.	294	67
1878-79	.	.	.	.	274	66
1879-80	.	.	.	.	237	64
1880-81	.	.	.	.	540	88
1881-82	.	.	.	.	444	52
<i>Serious casualties:—</i>						
1876-77	.	.	.	.	726	101
1877-78	.	.	.	.	587	130
1878-79	.	.	.	.	517	96
1879-80	.	.	.	.	499	103
1880-81	.	.	.	.	608	74
1881-82	.	.	.	.	615	101
<i>Minor casualties:—</i>						
1876-77	.	.	.	.	1,783	181
1877-78	.	.	.	.	1,565	176
1878-79	.	.	.	.	1,222	138
1879-80	.	.	.	.	938	116
1880-81	.	.	.	.	1,421	125
1881-82	.	.	.	.	1,564	153

*Collisions which occurred to British vessels abroad and to foreign vessels on the coasts of British Possessions.*

Gross Totals				
1876-77	.	362	of which 144	] arose from 'neglect to show lights,' 'neglect of sailing rules,' 'general negligence, and want of caution,' and 'errors in judgment.'
1877-78	.	Statistics cannot be given		
1878-79	.	414	of which 167	
1879-80	.	311	" 133	
1880-81	.	325	" 153	
1881-82	.	329	" 133	

*Quarterly  
Review.*

An article on Merchant Shipping in the *Quarterly Review* contained a comparative summary of wrecks, dating back to the period when complete statistics were first collected. The conclusion drawn was highly favourable to British shipping.

According to the returns presented to the Committee on Shipwrecks in 1836, the average number of ships lost in 1833, 1834, and 1835 was 600; the number of tons lost was 85,696; and of lives 1,000. The corresponding figures for 1841-42 are: ships 611, tons 129,000, and lives lost 766. The figures for 1861-62 are: ships lost belonging to the whole British Empire 1,004, tons lost 251,000, and lives 1,316. The returns for 1870, 1871, and 1872 give the loss of ships 1,090, the tons 318,000, and the lives lost 1,972. The average tonnage of British shipping entered and cleared in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom in 1833, 1834, and 1835 was 2,276,408; in 1842, 6,730,000; in 1861, 15,894,000; and in 1870, 1871, and 1872, 27,275,000.

In the mastery of statistics and intimate knowledge of administrative and legislative detail exhibited by the *Quarterly Review* we seem to discover the hand of Mr. Farrer; and we shall receive with the deeper interest the deductions he draws from the figures which he has brought together:—

Comparison of proportion of wrecks to tonnage and employment at these periods.

‘Taking the figures, with all necessary qualifications, remembering that the returns for the earlier period give a number of wrecks smaller, and an aggregate of registered tonnage greater, than it really was; remembering also that the earlier returns are for the United Kingdom only, whilst the later returns of wrecks and tonnage are for the Empire, and remembering also the increase of collisions and of dangers arising from increased speed, we have the following results:—

‘Between 1818 and 1835 (taking the estimate of the Committee of 1836 for the later period) the loss of ships had increased 50 per cent., and the loss of life 31 per cent., whilst the shipping had remained about the same in amount. Between 1836 and 1842 the loss of ships and of life had remained about the same, so far as we can now judge, whilst the number of ships had increased by 18 per cent., the tonnage by 29 per cent., and the foreign employment by 45 per cent.

‘Between 1836 and 1862 the loss of ships had increased by 67 per cent., of tons 193 per cent., and of life by 32 per cent.; whilst the number of ships had increased by 100 per cent., the tonnage by 158 per cent., and the foreign employment by 226 per cent.

‘Between 1862 and 1872 the loss of ships had increased by 9



per cent., of tons 27 per cent., and of life by 50 per cent.; whilst the number of ships had decreased by 5 per cent., but the tonnage had increased by 22 per cent., and the foreign employment by 81 per cent.

‘Between 1836 and 1872 the loss of ships had increased by 83 per cent., of tons 273 per cent., and of life by 97 per cent.; whilst the number of ships had increased by 91 per cent., the tonnage by 215 per cent., and the foreign employment by 489 per cent.

‘In other words, whilst for every ship lost in 1833–34–35 there were 3,794 tons on the register, and 7,714 tons employed in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom, for every ship lost in 1870–71–72 there were 6,547 tons on the register, and 24,909 tons so employed; whilst for every 100 tons lost in 1833–34–35 there were 2,656 tons on the register, and 5,401 tons employed in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom, for every 100 tons lost in 1870–71–72 there were 2,242 tons on the register, and 8,529 tons employed in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom; and whilst for every life lost in 1833–34–35 there were 2,276 tons on the register, and 4,628 tons employed in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom, for every life lost in 1870–71–72 there were 3,635 tons on the register, and 13,831 tons so employed.

‘The above results are so striking that I have had them tested in another way. The number of ships actually employed in the trade of the United Kingdom being known from the year 1849, the number employed in the earlier years has been estimated from them, and the wrecks at the different periods have been compared with these numbers with the following results:—

Periods	Average Annual Percentage of Ships Lost to Average Number of Ships Employed				
1833–34–35	.	.	.	.	3.72
1841–42	.	.	.	.	3.20
1860–61–62	.	.	.	.	3.00
1870–71–72	.	.	.	.	2.95

‘If these figures can be trusted, and for the purpose of a general comparison I have no doubt they may, they entirely dispose of the allegation that employment in British shipping is far more dangerous now than it was 40 years ago, at a time antecedent to the repeal of the Navigation Laws. And by the comparison between 1816 and 1836, qualified as it must be by an allowance for the errors I have pointed out, it is also clear that at the commencement of this century no such golden period of safety as is assumed in the extracts I have quoted above ever existed at all.’

The views of the Board of Trade are sanguine and reassuring, but

when we take into view the many additional facilities which science has given to navigation in modern times, the improvement in the lighting of the coasts, the immense facilities from the application of steam-power to marine propulsion, the increased tonnage of the modern sailing vessels, and, not least, the great structural strength resulting from the substitution of iron for wood in all ships of large tonnage, it is scarcely satisfactory to find that the losses have kept pace in such unbroken regularity with the increase in the tonnage.

Losses from  
careless  
navigation.

The number of collisions and disasters attributable to carelessness tends to confirm the impression that the navigation of our merchant service falls very short of perfection, and we cannot but share the opinion expressed in the *Shipping Gazette* reprinted with full approval by the Mercantile Marine Association of Liverpool:—

‘Our readers will remember that the Royal Commissioners at the opening of their final report say, as the result of their first investigations in one direction, that “from the year 1856 to 1862, a period of 17 years, while 60 ships were known to have been lost from defects in the vessel or in the stowage, 711 ships were lost from neglect or bad navigation.”

‘The evidence, taken for a series of years before courts of inquiry, proves unquestionably that ships have been lost by defective lookout, by negligent or ignorant steering, and by the want of seamanlike skill and knowledge amongst the crews; but the evidence proves also that ships have been lost by recklessness, ignorance, neglect, or incompetence on the part of masters and officers, and especially of the latter. As the earliest advocates of the system of examination for masters and mates, we are the first to admit the advantages which that system has conferred on merchant captains and officers, and, as a direct consequence, their improvement in status and attainments; but the system has not by any means completed its work, or produced the results of which, properly administered, it is capable.’

It may be appropriate to point out that in no instance has an officer been punished, except by loss of certificate, for gross negligence, even when leading to loss of life, since the case of the ‘Orion’ in Scotland, more than twenty years ago.

The views of Mr. Farrer on this subject were elicited by the following interrogatories:—

Punish-  
ment for  
railway ac-  
cidents  
more  
severe.

‘12,290. (*Mr. Brassey.*) Bringing my railway experience to bear upon the question, there would seem to me to be very much greater severity in the punishments inflicted upon the servants of railway companies for neglect of duty than in those which are inflicted under

the existing law upon seamen who neglect their duty?—I think the law is more often put in force in the case of railway servants.

‘12,291. Not only is it more often put in force in the case of railway servants, but the punishment is more severe in their case, is it not?—No, I do not think the punishment is more severe in their case; I think the railway servant is punishable at common law, and that for any similar default the sailor could be punished; and in addition to that there is the special clause of the Merchant Shipping Act, s. 239, which makes any neglect of duty on the part of the sailor tending to the loss of the ship, a misdemeanour.

‘12,292. In a case where neglect of duty or failure of vigilance on the part of an engine-driver on a railway has caused the death of some of the passengers, the driver of the locomotive may be punished, may he not, for manslaughter?—I imagine that the look-out man on the ship might equally be punished for manslaughter if loss of life ensued through his negligence.

‘12,293. The difference has really arisen, not so much from any difference in the code of law as from a more stringent application of the law in the one case than in the other?—Quite so; because the public are always travelling by railway, and because they have railway accidents under their eyes.’

The improvement in the officers in the merchant service has been already freely acknowledged. I have been much impressed with the great success, the result unquestionably of long and constant practice, with which sailing ships and steamers are navigated amid the many dangers which surround our coasts in the thick and tempestuous weather so prevalent in these latitudes. As an instance of great perfection in another line, I may refer to the success with which our steamers are navigated, notwithstanding the deviation of the compass in many iron ships. It is a glorious sight to see the numerous fleets, converging from the most distant parts of the seas towards any point on our coasts, usually selected as a landfall for ships, arriving from a lengthened ocean voyage. In the autumn of 1874 I happened to be cruising for a whole day between the Fastnet and the Old Head of Kinsale. There was a whole sail breeze from the west, and in the course of a few hours we saw several hundred sail rise up from the horizon in rapid succession, bearing down with unerring accuracy on the exact point on the coast, which it is usual for homeward bound ships to make when arriving from Australia or America.

While many merchant officers deficient, the majority competent, and some most highly qualified.

The examinations introduced by the Board of Trade have unquestionably led to a rapid advance in the standard of professional



In trade  
with  
Northern  
Europe,  
Swedish  
and Norwe-  
gian mas-  
ters prefer-  
red to  
British.

attainment. Our merchant service possesses many officers who would be ornaments to any profession. England was never better prepared to furnish armaments without a rival in any sea. On the other hand, there are trades and there are ships where the owners will not pay such a salary as would secure efficient service; and in those trades where this ill-judged parsimony is most prevalent we are losing ground in the race with our foreign competitors. In the trade with Northern Europe the foreign masters show the most marked superiority over the English captains. Besides the great advantages which the Swedish and Norwegian shipmasters naturally possess in dealing with their own countrymen and in being thoroughly acquainted with the navigation of their own seas, they are generally, in point of education, professional knowledge, manners, and steadiness, superior to by far the greater number of British shipmasters. Under one form or another the same remark has been repeatedly made; but nowhere does its accuracy strike even casual observers more forcibly than in Sweden. As a consequence, shippers both there and in Great Britain employ the former in preference to the latter, although their terms may be identical. To such an extent have the former gained the confidence of shippers in general throughout the world, that of late years, in spite of the enormous additions to their mercantile fleets, they are by slow degrees discarding the wood and coal trade between the two countries for more remunerative employment elsewhere. Should this really prove to be the case, as it is asserted on good authority, it would materially detract from whatever importance might be attached to the numerical (though not proportional) increase already noticed as having taken place in the amount of British shipping engaged in the Swedish trade.

Admiral  
Beechey.

Precisely similar views were expressed in the memorandum prepared by Admiral Beechey for the information of the Manning Committee in 1852:—‘Since the repeal of the Navigation Laws and the increase of foreign vessels in our port, one circumstance,’ he said, ‘has attracted the attention of observant persons, viz., the superiority of masters of vessels belonging to the northern parts of Europe, Sweden and Norway, especially in point of mercantile ability, as compared with our men. There is hardly a common seaman that comes from those countries but has a tolerable acquaintance with the English language, the rate of exchanges, &c., and is enabled to conduct his own business without the intervention of an interpreter. As compared with them it is very rarely that a master of a British merchant vessel of a very moderate burthen is met with that can talk any language but his own; and as to our seamen, with the hearty

contempt that they have for "them there foreigners," such a thing is out of the question. It is a great drawback, and the cause of a thousand and one embarrassments in foreign ports. When this passage is compared with the recent report of Mr. Gould, already quoted at length, and with the remarks of Mr. Ward, our Vice-Consul at Memel, it is disappointing to discover so little improvement. Unless a superior class of officers is employed, it seems evident that British shipping will no longer be able to compete for the trade of transporting the cheap commodities exported from Sweden.'

Having called attention to the fact that many British vessels are inefficiently commanded, we must proceed to consider the various means by which an adequate professional status and efficiency may be secured for the officers of the merchant service. To raise them to a higher level, both as regards attainments and social position, would be the most effectual means of promoting the security of life and property at sea. The officers in command must be the persons best acquainted with the condition of their ships, with their behaviour at sea, the amount of cargo that can be safely carried, and the proper mode of stowage. The difficulty is to secure in the masters of vessels that personal independence without which no reliance can be placed on their judgment. I give an illustration of what occurs not so seldom as it might be desired, taken from a journal kept of a voyage in the Mediterranean in 1874:—

Plans for raising professional qualifications of merchant service.

Want of independence in some shipmasters.

'The vast maritime trade through the Bosphorus, of which British steamships absorb an immense proportion, has, in a very practical way, attracted our attention to the questions, so ably agitated by Mr. Plimsoll, respecting a fixed load-line for merchant shipping. We have seen a lamentably large number of English steamers more or less overladen. No steamships belonging to the shipowners of other nations are so deeply laden as our own. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that during the month we have passed in the Bosphorus we have not seen a single instance of a foreign steamer overladen. It seems as if the spirit of commercial competition had made our shipowners insensible to all the perils incidental to the undue loading of their ships. There are, of course, conspicuous exceptions. For example, the steamers owned by Messrs. Burns and MacIver are always in excellent trim.

Illustrative case.

'As an illustration of what was daily passing under our observation, I may perhaps be permitted to dwell on an incident that occurred, which would have furnished Mr. Plimsoll with a theme for one of his most telling and impassioned harangues. A steamer—I need not give the name—had attracted our attention, on our return

to the Bosphorus from Broussa, as being too deeply laden to encounter the severe weather so prevalent at this season of the year (November) in the Bay of Biscay, and sometimes in the Mediterranean. We anchored near the steamer in question, and presently received a visit from the chief engineer, who came to claim my sympathy for the crew of the overladen ship to which he belonged. He complained that the vessel was not only deep, but deficient in strength, especially in the topsides, and that there was a considerable leakage in consequence. He concluded by telling me that he had already written to his wife, informing her that his ship was dangerously deep, and that should he never return, his death might be attributed to this cause. He said that he should now write a second letter, telling his wife that should the ship be lost, and should an inquiry be instituted, she must take care that I was summoned to give evidence against the owners.

‘The case, as stated by the engineer, seemed to be of a nature to deserve the attention of the British Consulate; and I accordingly informed Sir Philip Francis, our able and energetic Consul-General at Constantinople, of the statement made to me by the engineer. I found Sir Philip only too anxious to deal vigorously with the case. At the British Consulate at Constantinople the desire has long been felt to make a few examples, and so gradually to deter owners from overloading. The legal powers of a consular court are, however, of a very limited character. The most effective instrument of control over the shipowner consists in the authority of the court to hear the complaints of seamen, and to release them from their engagements of service, if they can show that they have engaged for an unseaworthy ship.

‘In the present instance, therefore, the Consul-General proposed to postpone any active steps until a complaint had been lodged by four members of the crew. Having promised that the ship should be carefully watched, I went on board at daybreak on the following morning, and informed the captain, who was on the point of sailing, of the statement made to me by his engineer. In reply, he informed me that he had only been in command a few days, having been sent out to Odessa to relieve his predecessor, who had been dismissed for bad conduct. He said that the former captain had frequently loaded the ship twenty-one inches deeper than her present draught, and that he saw no reason for anxiety. The statement was not made with mistaken confidence; and I told him that I should consider it my duty to ascertain whether there was any desire on the part of the crew to make a complaint, and that if such were the case, I should



take care that Sir Philip Francis was duly informed. The master accordingly directed the crew to be mustered, in order that I might have an opportunity of interrogating them. While the men were assembling, he became painfully distressed. He wrung his hands, and exclaimed that for permitting me to come on board he would be a ruined man, and would certainly be dismissed from his employment. Having done my best to reassure the master, to whom personally no blame could be attached, I proceeded to explain my mission to the crew. Readers of what has preceded will be surprised to learn that instantly on the conclusion of my brief address the engineer stepped forward, and, with marked emphasis, declared that he saw no reason whatever for complaint; that he had frequently sailed in the ship when much more deeply laden; that the behaviour of the vessel had always been admirable, even in the most trying weather, and that he looked forward to the voyage on which they were about to proceed—from Constantinople to Bergen—with the most perfect confidence. This speech, so grossly inconsistent with the moving appeal which he had made to me on the previous evening, was interrupted by murmurs among the crew, some of whom inquired why, if the ship were sound, the pump should be so constantly kept going while the vessel was in harbour. This objection was explained away by the engineer; and as I perceived that there had been no previous intention on the part of the crew to complain, and I was determined not to be instrumental in creating a spirit of discontent, I at once dismissed the crew and left the ship.

‘The conduct of the engineer in this instance clearly deserves severe condemnation. If he believed his original statement to be true, his only motive for taking up an attitude so entirely different in the presence of his shipmates must have been his fear of losing his employment. It is no doubt a great trial to incur such a risk; but the contingency ought to be faced before accusations are brought forward against the shipowners, who can have no chance of defending themselves, if their accusers have not the courage to come forward and appeal to an authorised tribunal of law.

‘The appointments of master and chief-engineer in the merchant service are the highest rewards of merit in the two branches of the maritime profession. To a seaman taken from before the mast, or to a working mechanic, the pay and position of a master or engineer are the objects of their most cherished ambition. The competition of candidates for such appointments is very keen, and the fear of losing such a desirable employment deprives men of that reasonable spirit of independence which no honest man should permit himself

to surrender. In the present instance I have the satisfaction of knowing that the interest I had had an opportunity of manifesting was not without some practical result. After a consultation with the agent for the owner, 100 tons of the cargo were discharged into lighters, and the vessel was thus to some extent relieved of her dangerous burthen.

Supervision of British shipping abroad.

‘Such an occurrence naturally awakens a desire to discover some effective means whereby the practice of overloading in a foreign port may be repressed. Forceful detention of the vessel is only possible in British waters; but it does not follow that nothing can be done. At a post of observation so important as the Bosphorus, a staff of surveyors might be stationed charged with the duty of keeping a watch upon British vessels passing through the port of Constantinople. Whenever a vessel appears too deeply laden the circumstance should be reported to the Board of Trade, to be notified by them to the owners, and to be used as part of the evidence in the case in the event of a vessel being lost, and an inquiry being held into the cause of the loss. The confidential nature of the duties to be performed, requiring both high character and superior professional knowledge on the part of the surveyors, would make it necessary to pay considerable salaries to the officers employed. In the Bosphorus two steam launches would be required to convey the surveyors to and fro among the shipping, and a considerable expense would be incurred under this head. That such an outlay would be readily sanctioned by the British public cannot, however, be the subject of doubt.

‘The appointment of Board of Trade surveyors as a corps of observation over our shipping navigating the Black Sea is one suggestion that I venture to make. Another, and, as I believe, a more important, proposal is, that surveyors, assisted by a competent legal adviser, should be appointed to the ports of Malta and Gibraltar. Both these stations are largely frequented by steamers for coaling. They lie on the high road of the Eastern and Mediterranean trades. Being within British jurisdiction, any law enacted by Parliament can be duly enforced, and almost every vessel passing to and from the Suez Canal, or the Mediterranean, would come under the notice of the surveyors.’

Sequel to foregoing narrative.

I have described the incident in the Bosphorus by transferring verbatim to these pages the narrative as recorded in my diary immediately after the occurrence. The sequel proved conclusively that it was not without cause that our attention had been directed to that deeply-laden steamer in the Bosphorus. The vessel encountered heavy, but not tempestuous, weather in the chops of the Channel,

and soon became unmanageable. After lying for several hours in the trough of the sea, she was abandoned off the Lizard. Happily, the crew were rescued by a pilot cutter.

An official inquiry was subsequently held at Glasgow, and the court pronounced the ship to have been much overladen. I was summoned to give evidence, and the engineer was of course examined. In a statement made on oath he repeated the same expressions of complete satisfaction with the ship which I had last heard from his lips when addressing his comrades assembled around him on the deck of the ship, on the eve of her departure from Constantinople, for what was destined to be her last voyage. Seeing that the event had so amply justified the strong complaint originally made by him to me in private, I was not a little astonished to hear such shameless prevarication. From this incident, which happened within my own experience, and which I regard as a typical case, I draw the painful conclusion that there is a lamentable want of independence among the engineers and masters of ships of an inferior class. It is the natural consequence of deficient education in men promoted from the ranks, who know themselves to be in danger of instant dismissal if they have the misfortune to give offence to their employers.

We are constantly reminded by shipowners of the difficulty of procuring competent crews for their ships. We do not hear so much on a not less vital point, namely, the professional status, qualification, and position generally of the officers of the merchant service. If only we could secure that the experience and the judgment of the officers of the mercantile marine would be freely exercised, if their hands would be so strengthened that they might give the same independent advice to the owners of merchant ships on these subjects which a barrister gives to his client when consulted on a point of law, a very large proportion of the precious lives and the property now lost at sea might undoubtedly be saved.

Shipmasters should be as independent as barristers.

With this end in view, two suggestions may be made—1. The importance of the duties entrusted to the officers of the merchant service should be recognised by a wise liberality as to the salaries on the part of shipowners. 2. The Government should afford every reasonable facility to young men intended for the merchant service for obtaining a high professional education.

In former times captains of East Indiamen realised fortunes by trading on their own account. In his *History of Merchant Shipping*, Mr. Lindsay thus describes their position:—

Formerly appointments more lucrative.

‘So many were their privileges, and so numerous their perquisites, that during five India or China voyages a captain of one of the Com-



Direct remuneration of commanders. W. S. Lindsay, pp. 469-471.

pany's ships ought to have realised sufficient capital to be independent for the remainder of his life.

'When we take these various privileges and perquisites into consideration, the *direct* remuneration to the commander of one of the Company's ships, inclusive of his monthly pay, must have averaged from 3,000*l.* to 5,000*l.* each voyage; but considering the various other privileges and indulgences granted to him, and the opportunities he had for trading on his own account in the export and import of goods and produce, at a time when the fabulously valuable commerce of India was an exclusive monopoly in the hands of the Company, we need have no hesitation in estimating the value, in many instances on each voyage, of a commander's appointment at from 8,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*, or perhaps a great deal more if he was a shrewd man of business, and had sufficient capital to fill the space allotted to him, as well as the "dunnage" corners and places not allotted to the Company's cargo, or not appropriated by their agents, with goods and produce of their own.'

Officers in the mercantile marine no longer command the same opportunities. Has the loss of income been adequately compensated by an augmentation of pay? When it is remembered that an error of judgment in the master may in some cases lead to the sacrifice of hundreds of lives, or that a single shipwreck may represent a loss of 500,000*l.*, and when we are being warned by our consular officers that British is being displaced by foreign shipping, owing to the incapacity of our ill-paid officers, there should be no hesitation on the part of shipowners to offer liberal salaries to competent men. My own impression is that the merchant officers as a body, and more especially those employed in the Baltic and South American trades, and in low-classed sailing ships in all parts of the world, are inadequately remunerated.

Captain Toynbee.

In this view I am supported by the observations made by Captain Toynbee in his speech delivered at the Society of Arts during the discussions on merchant seamen in 1875: 'Shipowners can supply good and comfortable ships, and have them properly loaded. They can select able men as commanders and give them sufficient pay. How can it be supposed that well-trained men can be found as commanders for 10*l.* or 12*l.* a month, with no other honest means for making money? One captain writes to say: "I know that some men in command of vessels up to 800 tons in the East India trade have only 10*l.* a month. A few days ago I was offered 350*l.* to go in a new sailing ship, and that is the highest pay I ever heard of. Shipowners very rarely allow any commissions on freight or passage

money, and forbid private ventures. Most shipowners are averse to masters taking their wives and families with them; and if they do they often charge for them." Of course there are a few fine exceptions to these low rates; but it seems that whilst we are specially training young gentlemen for the merchant service, and all articles for supporting a family are getting more expensive, the pay of the mass of merchant captains is decreasing. I have heard bitter complaints from conscientious men as to their difficulties in supporting a wife and family. They have told me how some get perquisites on coaling, others on provisioning abroad, &c., which, as honest men, they could not accept.'

The salaries now paid, according to Captain Toynbee, to the masters of the smaller ships in the East India trade are about the same, or at least they are not higher than Mr. Richard Green paid in 1852 to the mates of his vessels. He told the committee of 1852 that he was giving to the chief mate from 7*l.* to 10*l.* a month, according to the size of the ship; second mate from 5*l.* to 6*l.*; third mate, 3*l.*; fourth mate, 2*l.* per month. The boatswains' wages were 4*l.* 10*s.*; carpenters, ditto, 5*l.* 10*s.*; able seamen, 2*l.*; and ordinary ditto, from 1*l.* 5*s.* to 1*l.* 15*s.* per month. Even in Mr. Green's splendid service it would appear that the remuneration of the responsible officers in charge of watches was small by comparison with the pay of the carpenter. In the one case, however, there was a prospect of promotion, whereas the working tradesman had reached the highest round of the ladder.

The appeals to the charitable on behalf of the officers of the merchant service deserve attention in connection with this subject. Several institutions have been established for the relief of aged seamen and their orphan children. In common with the great mass of subscribers, I was under the impression that, in contributing to the support of the asylums, I was doing something to relieve the wants of the working people, and it was a grievous disappointment—a disappointment which it is certain will be felt by other contributors—to find that the great majority of the recipients of the benefits of these institutions have been not the seamen, but the officers of the merchant service.

Charitable  
institutions  
for  
seamen.

It is evident from the returns from the few institutions in existence for the special benefit of seamen that little is done in them for the relief of men before the mast. The majority of those who obtain assistance are masters and mates. It seems, therefore, only reasonable to infer that many shipowners think they have discharged their obligations to their officers if they can succeed in procuring their

elections to institutions established by the charity of the public for the relief of poor sailors.

A reasonable rise in salaries a small burden compared with other expenses.

It may be thought unbecoming on the part of a mere looker-on to urge the shipowners to raise the salaries of their officers. The writer lays no claim to interference in the private arrangements of shipowners and their officers. British shipping is exposed to severe competition both from foreigners and from the over-production of tonnage in this country. Unless, therefore, every item of expenditure is most carefully criticised, it is impossible for the shipowner to make even a moderate profit. The returns upon the business of shipowning—especially where it is conducted upon a limited scale—have been so reduced, that economy has become the ruling consideration, and there is neither the ability nor the disposition to sanction the smallest item of unnecessary expenditure. An increase, however, in the salaries of shipmasters, or at least of those entitled to claim higher remuneration, would be a trifling charge by comparison with the immense losses from depreciated freights.

'Worcester' and 'Conway.'

I pass from the subject of the salaries, which is a commercial question, with which neither the House of Commons nor the Government are competent to deal, and I turn to the question of professional education. Here the Government *can* render valuable aid. Successful efforts have already been made by private associations to establish school-ships for officers. The 'Worcester' has been established on the Thames, and the 'Conway' on the Mersey, for the attainment of this object.

The rules for the management of the 'Conway' were framed by the Mercantile Marine Service Association of Liverpool, under whose auspices the ship is conducted. The rules are here inserted, as giving the best information as to the kind of education required by youths intended to become officers of merchant ships:—

#### SCHOOL-FRIGATE H.M.S. 'CONWAY.'

This Institution (now conducted on board H.M.S. 'Conway,' moored in the River Mersey, off Rock Ferry), is designed mainly to train and educate boys intended for officers in the merchant navy.

There is a complete and efficient nautical and educational staff maintained, by whom the boys are carefully and regularly instructed, and exercised in all the duties of a first-class ship, and receive the general education mentioned (on page 218).

Her Majesty the Queen has been pleased to declare her intention to present annually a gold medal to the boys of the 'Conway.'

Her Majesty's wish in the establishment of this prize is to encourage



the boys to acquire and maintain the qualities which will make the finest sailor. These consist of cheerful submission to superiors, self-respect and independence of character, kindness, and protection to the weak, readiness to forgive offence, desire to conciliate the differences of others, and, above all, fearless devotion to duty, and unflinching truthfulness. The following Regulations will, by her Majesty's command, be observed in awarding the prize:—'The medal will be open to boys who have been one year on board the ship, and have received not less than half the total number of marks at the previous quarterly examinations. The commander, after conferring with the head masters, shall select not less than three, nor more than five, of the boys whom he considers to possess the qualities for which the prize is given. He shall then submit these names to the boys who have been assembled for the purpose in the school, and each boy who has been on board six months (one session) previously to the time of distribution, shall then and there vote for one of the boys so selected. The boy who obtains the highest number of votes shall receive the medal. These Regulations shall be placed upon a board on the main deck, to be called the "Queen's Prize List," and the names of each boy who receives the medal shall be recorded upon such list.'

Her Majesty has also been pleased, with a view to encourage boys of the 'Conway' to qualify themselves for cadetships in the Navy when granted by the Admiralty, to declare her intention of offering a prize annually to the boys who compete for cadetships in Her Majesty's service. This prize will consist of a binocular glass, with a suitable inscription, and a sum of 35*l.* towards the expense of the outfit of the boy who obtains the prize.

Five appointments annually as midshipmen in the Royal Naval Reserve are given by the Lords of the Admiralty.

By an order of the Board of Trade *two years on board the 'Conway' will be reckoned as one year at sea.* The Committee recommend that the boys should not leave the 'Conway' at the end of the second year, unless well advanced in their professional studies.

Many of the Committee and leading shipowners of Liverpool will give a preference to the cadets of the institution, and receive them as apprentices without premium, *on their course of not less than two years being completed to the satisfaction of the commander, and they not being under sixteen years of age.*

The terms of admission are forty guineas per annum, payable half-yearly in advance.

Ten guineas is also charged at the commencement of each year for the uniform and outer clothing, medical attendance, washing, use of books, and stationery. The parents or friends of boys are required to find their under-clothing and shoes, as mentioned in the list attached.

The sons of nautical members of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, and of deceased and unfortunate members of the merchant service, having privileges in admission (regulated by the subscriptions and the powers given by subscribers to the Committee), and those of officers in the

Royal Navy, are admitted at thirty guineas instead of forty guineas per annum.

Applications for admission of boys must be accompanied by a certificate of birth, a testimonial of good character from their last schoolmaster, or from the clergyman or minister of the church they attend, and a medical certificate that they are healthy.

Boys who have completed their course can remain on board when there is room, until they obtain ships, paying four guineas per month in advance.

No boys are received under the age of twelve, or who have passed their sixteenth birthday.

No boy will be considered eligible who cannot read, write, and spell fairly, and work correctly questions in the simple rules of arithmetic. A previous knowledge of algebra and Euclid will be found very advantageous.

Boys are not enrolled unless passed by the medical officer of the ship, and approved by the commander.

*General Scheme of Education, Instruction, and Discipline.*

In school all the pupils are under the two senior masters and their assistants. Their studies comprise :—

English Grammar	Geography	Algebra	Navigation
Reading	Writing	Geometry	Nautical Astronomy
Composition	Arithmetic	Trigonometry	Swimming
History			Chart Drawing

During nautical instruction the pupils are under the commander and nautical staff, when they are exercised in all the duties of a first-class ship, and are taught knotting, splicing, reefing, furling, heaving the lead, the marks on the lead-line, heaving the log, the management of boats, and practical navigation generally.

French is taught on two afternoons in each week. Latin is only taught when required by parents, at an extra charge of 1*l.* 1*s.* each half year. Lectures on various subjects of interest are given occasionally, as well as general instructions in some of the most useful and practical departments of surgery and medicine.

The boys are taught to sling and lash up their own hammocks. Each in his turn serves as messman for one day to his mess, under the inspection and guidance of the captain of the mess. In turn the boys keep an anchor watch, two at a time, for two hours.

Divine service is performed on Sunday, and prayers are read twice each day.

The holidays are from July 1 to 31, and from December 20 to January 31.

The system of education is framed with a view to the boys remaining on board not less than two years.

When we recall the observations of our Consuls in the Baltic

ports on the ignorance of foreign languages among English ship-masters, it will be noticed with regret that very limited attention is paid on board the 'Conway' to a branch of study so essential to a sea officer. While offering this criticism, I acknowledge with much satisfaction the general success of the school. The Committee may be congratulated on having obtained from the Admiralty the line-of-battle ship 'Nile,' a much more commodious and suitable vessel than the present 'Conway.' The 'Worcester,' on the Thames, is conducted on the same principle as the 'Conway.' Both these ships have turned out a large number of pupils who have done credit to the training they have received.

As, however, only a limited number of the officers required can be obtained from these ships, which are supported entirely by voluntary contributions, it becomes, in my opinion, necessary that the Government should take a part in the education of the mercantile marine. I advocate that view on the ground that the Naval Reserve cannot be regarded as complete, till we have raised up in the merchant service a body of duly qualified officers.

Government  
should aid  
in training  
officers of  
merchant  
service.

If we assume that the reserves shall consist of 20,000 men, and allow one officer for every twenty men, a thousand officers will be required. In order to secure so large a number, I would propose, in the first place, to adopt Captain Sherard Osborn's suggestion, and abolish the special grades of officers now employed, to the number of 626, in the Royal Navy, including the navigating class, the paymasters, the naval instructors, and admirals' secretaries. In time of peace officers of the executive or military branches might be employed in these duties. In time of war these officers would resume their military duties. Their appointments would be temporarily filled, partly by officers of the merchant service, who would relieve many officers of the Royal Navy in the navigating duties, and partly by civilians, who could always be obtained in sufficient numbers to serve as paymasters and admirals' secretaries. The adoption of this plan would give us a disposable force of 500 officers. If more officers were necessary, they could be obtained, as they were in the civil war in America, from the merchant service.

The Secretary of the United States Navy, in his Report for the year 1865-66, states that about 7,500 officers of the merchant navy had, after examination, received appointments and been employed in the navy of the Union. 'Schools,' he says, 'were established to instruct and perfect them in the rudiments of naval gunnery; and it is due to them to say that they have acquitted themselves with zeal and fidelity. The intercourse between those volunteer officers and



the officers of the regular Navy has been productive of mutual goodwill and respect. It will, I trust, lead to a lasting personal friendship, and constitute an enduring intimacy between the commercial and naval services. Most of the volunteer officers have received an honourable discharge, and returned to their peaceful professional service.'

Until a recent period it has been assumed that we ought to maintain in time of peace a sufficient number of officers for a war Navy. It has followed, as a necessary but regrettable consequence, that we have appropriated one-fifth of the sum provided for naval purposes to the payment, on a pitiful scale, of half-pay and pensions. The lists have now been so reduced that they would no longer furnish all the officers required for a war.

Merchant  
service  
must fur-  
nish officers  
for Naval  
Reserve.

The policy of enrolling officers of our merchant service in the Reserves has received the unqualified approval of many high authorities. In his speech to the House of Commons on the manning of the navy in 1860, Mr. Lindsay said that, 'If they were to raise the Reserves to the full extent recommended, they had not got officers sufficient to command them. If, however, they were to look to the merchant service, where quite as strict an examination was undergone as in the Royal Navy, and perhaps stricter, they would have no difficulty in obtaining the number of officers required for a very small retaining fee indeed. Money was not so much an object with them as the position they would gain at home and abroad, by being recognised as officers of the Reserve.'

Sir C. Napier.

The views of Mr. Lindsay were fully confirmed by Sir Charles Napier. He said:—'Suppose you had obtained your Naval Reserve men, where would you get officers to command them? You would then find it absolutely necessary to come to the merchant service. Why not come to that service now? Assign the volunteers their rank, and give them some slight decoration.'

If the position of an officer of the Naval Reserve be made sufficiently attractive, young gentlemen may be obtained in large numbers from the mercantile marine, well educated, and well trained in the nautical branches of their profession, and therefore thoroughly qualified to co-operate with the Navy.

Mr. Lindsay in his separate Report, as a member of the Manning Commission of 1859, stated:—'There is now in the merchant service a very large number of well-educated young men of good families, the greater proportion of them not inferior in capacity and social position to those who enter the Royal Navy. Since the passing of the Merchant Shipping Act, all these young men are

required to undergo an examination at a competent public Board before they can become masters of ships. Their examination at that Board in navigation and seamanship is as complete as any examination which could be instituted by the Admiralty for officers of the Royal Navy. From these gentlemen in the mercantile marine I would form a reserve of officers, to be distributed amongst our ships of war, when the reserve of seamen from the merchant service, the Coastguard, and the Naval Coast Volunteers, shall be called into active operation. A very small gratuity by way of retaining fee would suffice to secure the services of these young men.'

These remarks could be made with even greater justice at the present time. Already on board the 'Conway,' in the Mersey, and the 'Worcester,' in the Thames, there are a number of pupils, the sons of officers of both services, of barristers, clergymen, and merchants, who are receiving an excellent education for the sea. To prepare these gentlemen for the Navy we have to complete what has been so well begun by giving to our Naval Reserves the same facilities for obtaining professional instruction, which have already been given to auxiliary forces on shore. Arrangements for a short course on gunnery for the officers of the Reserve should be organised on board the 'Excellent' or 'Cambridge.' No officer of the mercantile marine should be allowed to join a school of gunnery until he had previously obtained a certificate as mate or master from the Board of Trade.

Officers of Reserve should go through a short course of gunnery.

A system of instruction once established, no officer of the mercantile marine should henceforth be eligible for a commission in the Naval Reserve, until he had previously passed his examination in gunnery on board the gunnery ship, or had obtained a certificate of competency from the commanding officer of a drill ship. A premium might be offered to officers of the merchant service for passing an examination in gunnery sufficient in amount to cover their expenses, and to compensate them for loss of time, while going through the prescribed course of instruction at Portsmouth. There are considerable difficulties to be overcome in mastering perfectly the details of naval gun drill. Those officers of the Reserve who do apply themselves zealously to the task, should receive some mark of distinction. Under the existing regulations all are placed on a footing of equality. No regard is paid to the zeal manifested in promoting the success of the Naval Reserve, whether by encouraging seamen to enrol, or by undergoing the ordeal of personal attendance at drill, with the view of mastering the intricate details which a well-trained gunner must understand and recollect.

Promotion  
and marks  
of distinction.

It may be difficult to establish a distinction of rank between those officers who are, and those who are not, proficient in the drills; but some small rank of honour should be conferred on those officers who have taken the trouble to go through the drills, and have succeeded in obtaining a certificate of proficiency. These officers might be distinguished in the *Navy List* by an asterisk inserted opposite their names. They might also be allowed to fly the blue ensign on board the vessel they command, without reference to the number of Naval Reserve men included in the ship's complement. Those officers, on the other hand, who do not hold a certificate of proficiency, should be allowed to fly the blue ensign only when they have the prescribed complement of Reserve men in their ship's company. No change need be made in the understanding entered into with the existing body of officers in the Reserve; but in the case of all future applicants for commissions, the complement of Naval Reserve men, which should enable them to fly the blue ensign, should be increased to twenty. It appears difficult to give a reason why the rank of lieutenant in the Naval Reserve should be given to masters in the mercantile marine except as a reward for zeal, either in recruiting for the force, or in acquiring knowledge of the duties of the Reserve. Under the present regulations the honorary rank has been bestowed so freely, that it scarcely confers that mark of distinction on him who receives it which a stricter limitation would have insured.

As a further encouragement to efficiency, lieutenants of the Royal Naval Reserve, being masters of a certain standing in the merchant service, should become eligible for promotion to a higher rank. The highest rank in the Reserve ought certainly to be that of commander, and, possibly, in some cases a commission as captain might be granted.

There would be the less inconvenience in giving an improved position, inasmuch as these officers would be principally employed in transports, yachts, and other non-combatant vessels. These higher ranks in the Reserve would not be given except as a reward for special services.

Qualifications  
of  
merchant  
officers.

It may be thought that an officer of the mercantile marine, however competent as a seaman and a navigator, might be ill-qualified to maintain discipline among a numerous crew. But when occasions have arisen for testing the capabilities of commanders in the merchant service, chosen with judgment for responsible posts, they have shown no incapacity in this respect. When the 'Great Eastern' was employed in laying down deep-sea cables, she was manned by the crew of a first-class frigate, and discipline was always maintained



on board, both under Sir James Anderson, when he held the command, and by his successor, Captain Halpin. It may be said that these officers were exceptional men. This may be, but still the illustration may be accepted as an equally conclusive proof of the possibility of introducing into the merchant service a very superior class of officers.

We should make an effort to encourage young gentlemen of education to make the mercantile marine a profession. It should be accepted as a new feature in our naval policy that we are to draw largely on the merchant service for officers, in case of war. If this principle were adopted we should not find ourselves at the conclusion of a war embarrassed with a multitude of permanent officers, for whom it would be equally impossible either to find employment or to make a liberal provision.

A reserve of officers in the merchant service the only means of keeping down Navy List.

The only remedy for this crying evil is a reduction of the lists, and that reduction can only be made with safety by creating a Reserve, on which the Navy may rely, composed of officers who, while ready to serve in the Navy in the event of war, will in peace find active and useful employment in the mercantile marine. It may be urged that if we take away the cream of the officers of the merchant service during the pressure of war, we shall seriously disorganise the commerce of the country. But, as there are more than 8,000 certificated masters, and a large number of chief officers, although well qualified to act as masters, are compelled, in ordinary times, to submit to a delay of many years in a subordinate grade, it is certain that all the officers our Navy could ever require might be supplied, without seriously disorganising the merchant service.

It would tend to bring together the two main elements of our maritime strength if the Navy were to undertake the preliminary training of a certain number of cadets for the merchant service, who should go through their theoretical course at Dartmouth, side by side with the cadets in training for the Royal Navy. Formerly there were opportunities of sending well-educated youths to sea in East Indiamen. That trade is now completely altered. Steamers passing through the Suez Canal have monopolised the conveyance of passengers. The number of sailing ships has been reduced, and the accommodation they afford for apprentices is, as a general rule, ill-adapted for that superior class whom it is desirable to attract to the mercantile marine. In the Navy, on the other hand, a well-considered system of training for young officers exists; and it ought to be made available for a certain proportion of cadets intended for the merchant service. They should receive nominations from the

Merchant cadets, Dartmouth.

Admiralty; and in the choice of candidates the sons of naval officers should be entitled to preference. These cadets should be required to pay the usual fees. They should be allowed to go through a two years' course at the school at Dartmouth, and to serve for a year in a sea-going training-ship or brig. If Dartmouth be opened in the manner proposed, it will be but a just compensation for the loss of numerous advantages formerly accorded to the sons of officers of the merchant service at Greenwich, but now restricted to the sons of seamen before the mast.

Merchant  
officers at  
Greenwich.

Officers of the mercantile marine at a later stage in their career, when they have attained to the grade of chief mate or master, should be permitted, under certain conditions, to enter the Naval University at Greenwich. If that university is to become in a true sense a national institution, it must be accessible to all officers of the merchant service who can pass a suitable entrance or matriculation examination, and thus prove their ability to profit by its teaching.

The lectures at Greenwich are already accessible to the mercantile marine. This is not enough. No professional advancement nor any direct advantages are derived from attending the course at Greenwich.

If, therefore, it be desired to encourage the study of higher subjects, appropriate to their profession, among the officers of the merchant service, I would propose that the Government should found ten studentships at Greenwich for the mercantile marine. Mates and masters should be eligible, after service at sea for three years, as certificated officers. The studentships should be obtained by competitive examination, and should be tenable for one year. The annual value should be sufficient to pay the expenses of officers studying at Greenwich, and to give, in addition, the sum of 6*l.* a month, being the ordinary pay of a subordinate officer in a first-class merchantman. The object would be to protect those who gained studentships from loss of income during the period of study.

It may be asked, what good may be expected from this proposal? I would say that the gradual introduction into the merchant service of officers of higher attainments, who have had associations with the Royal Navy, must be a mutual benefit to the two services and a public advantage. We might look to the Greenwich students as men well qualified to serve in the Navy in time of war, and we might expect that their example and influence in their own service in time of peace would tend to raise the general tone of their profession. The creation of a Naval University, open to both branches of our national marine, may prove the means of uniting more closely the Navy and the merchant service. Those who avail themselves of the

educational opportunities afforded to them in our national seminary of naval lore, will lose their identity in the mutual pursuit of scientific studies, and will learn to recognise each other as members of one honourable profession, each branch of which must flourish if England is to retain her naval preponderance, and every member of which should acknowledge with pride that he is bound to take his part in defending the honour of his country.

Captain Wilson, in his plans for a combined training of seamen, proposed that young officers of the mercantile marine, after they have had some experience at sea, should serve in the Navy as candidates on probation for commissions in the Naval Reserve. 'It would,' he said, 'be no hardship, but much to the advantage of young seamen coming on to pass a few years under the pendant before going into the Reserve, and the same may be said of the young merchant officers. These gentlemen, as sub-lieutenants in the Reserve, should be required to embark for six months in one of our Channel or Mediterranean ships before being qualified for promotion to lieutenant's rank. The report from the captain under whom they serve should be considered, in combination with their other claims, before they received promotion.'

Probationary service for commissions in Naval Reserve.

I would gladly accept Captain Wilson's proposal as an alternative to the course of study at Greenwich. Whether it be by a short course at the Naval University, or by a year's service in the Navy, the training received, and the link thus established with the national service, would be alike beneficial to the Navy and the mercantile marine.

If it is thought practicable to receive officers from the merchant service for instruction in school ships, how much more easy must it be to admit them to a participation in the educational advantages of Greenwich. In adopting this course we shall be following the example of a Government under whose fostering care maritime enterprise has been developed of late years with a success unparalleled in any other country. The tonnage of the Norwegian shipping was doubled in the ten years 1860 to 1870. It amounted to 559,000 tons in 1863, and had increased to 1,022,000 tons in 1870, and to 1,520,000 tons in 1881. What has been the policy of the Norwegian Government?

Policy of Norwegian Government.

It is thus described in Consul Crowe's Report to Mr. Lindsay's Committee:—

'The Norwegian Government has endeavoured to assimilate the condition of the mercantile and naval service. In addition to the practical tests required, it made certain intellectual acquirements obligatory on masters. The result has been, an intelligent, sober,

Remarks of Mr. Crowe, Consul-General in Norway.



and respectable class has been formed, which has secured a confidence and respect for their marine, which a similar class of our ships and mariners have not been able to sustain.

‘It is not unfrequent that lieutenants in the Navy obtain permission to take the command of merchant vessels, which is in consequence considered a highly respectable employment, and not, as it is with us frequently, the casual possession of an uncultivated sailor or disappointed naval officer.

‘Public policy has dictated that masters and mates should be men of education, qualified, in case of need, to be employed in the Royal Navy.’

Lavish expenditure on science and art.

Since the date of the Report of 1860, our shipping and our financial resources have increased in marvellous proportions. It cannot be urged that we are unable to support some additional expenditure on our mercantile marine. We have made great efforts to afford a higher education in art and science to other classes and professions. The School of Mines and Schools of Science and Art at South Kensington, the Engineering College at Haileybury, and other similar institutions of recent creation, attest the earnest desire of the Government to improve the educational resources of the country. We were asked in the last session of Parliament to vote 365,000*l.* for the Science and Art Department, including 56,000*l.* for South Kensington, the India Museum, and Bethnal Green, 17,000*l.* for the School of Mines, 2,378*l.* for the Botanic Gardens, and 6,500*l.* for the College of Science at Dublin. Our duty, in the education of those who follow the sea as a profession, has not hitherto been recognised.

It may further be suggested that shipowners and their officers, should establish an association for the purpose of watching over their professional interests. A similar institution has long existed with great advantage in every other profession. The lawyers, the doctors, the engineers, the architects, have a systematic organisation; and the mercantile marine should possess an institution of a similar character.

Professional associations for merchant service

It may be that there are exceptional difficulties in organising such an institute on a broad and comprehensive scale. It is probably as true to-day as it was at the date of Lord Ellenborough's Report, that ‘masters of merchant vessels differ widely in their qualifications and character, and are of many various grades in society; while some may be little superior to seamen, there are others not only distinguished by the highest acquirements in the practice and science of navigation, but as gentlemen of the best education and manners.’

Some professional organisation, however, is most desirable. The

local efforts, so happily begun at Liverpool and elsewhere, ought to be extended and brought to a focus at a central institution in London. It might be made the means of diffusing nautical experiences, and might give valuable protection in those cases, which are happily rare, where an attempt is made to bring pressure upon a shipmaster to induce him to go to sea in an overladen or unseaworthy ship. Such an institution should neither be set up nor subsidised by the Government. Shipowners and officers are equally interested in the undertaking, and with the help of the public, who have often been liberal in a less excellent cause, it might be maintained in full efficiency without a grant from the Treasury. At the same time, in order to ensure the success of the movement, it should receive the countenance and patronage of the Government.

Seeing that there are in the merchant service a number of officers largely exceeding the opportunities for employment, and that such a state of things tends to depreciate their salaries, it becomes the more desirable to promote by every practicable means the independence of the profession. Nothing is so calculated to create and to sustain that reasonable spirit of independence as a high education. It may, therefore, be prudent, for the greater security of life at sea, to raise the standard of examinations for the appointment of masters at least to the higher commands, and especially to the command of emigrant ships or of great ocean mail steamers.

Standard of  
examina-  
tions may  
be raised.

The Board of Trade would add to the prestige and efficiency of the officers of the mercantile marine by requiring a broader education in the candidates for first-class extra masters' certificates. The examination should include not merely navigation and seamanship, but one foreign language at least, and the elements of a commercial education. The latter qualification would prove invaluable to the captain of a mercantile ship, as the representative of the interests of his owner abroad. A higher general education would enable officers of the mercantile marine to command superior salaries; and if, by passing an examination in gunnery, they could obtain a moderate annual stipend from the State, the commanders in the mercantile marine would be more adequately rewarded, and the profession would acquire a status more commensurate with its real importance than it has hitherto reached. The proposed extension of the scope of the examinations need not necessarily be in the line of mathematics. Such subjects as naval architecture, modern languages, commercial knowledge in its many various forms, whether relating to law, the foreign exchanges, or to general trades, would be scarcely less useful to the captain of a merchant ship than the mathematical theory of

Scope of  
Board of  
Trade ex-  
aminations  
enlarged.

navigation. It is one of the highest claims of the men of science, to whom we owe the art of navigation, that they have made the practice of it so simple, that it is within the compass of persons of very limited attainments.

To make a good landfall, accuracy in observations and careful arithmetic are essential; trigonometry is superfluous. For the purposes of practical navigation the present examinations sufficiently test the candidate's knowledge. The *Quarterly Reviewer* thus enumerates the subjects in which candidates have to pass: 'A master must be 21 years of age, bring good testimonials and certificates of service, and, in addition to good writing, the first five rules of arithmetic and logarithms; he must be able to work a day's work, with the distance and bearing of the port he is bound to, by Mercator's and the other usual methods; to perform all the corrections required in the *Nautical Almanac*; to find the latitude (thus far the same rule applies to candidates for the certificate of a mate) by sun and star both on and off the meridian; to observe and calculate the amplitude of the sun, and deduce the variation of the compass therefrom; to observe and compute variation by azimuths; to find the longitude by chronometer and observation of the sun; to compare and keep the rates of chronometers; to know the law of the tides, and ascertain the state of the tide in any part of the world by the known time at the full and change of the moon; to explain the nature and mode of determining the extent of the attraction of the ship's iron on the compass. He must also pass a thorough examination in seamanship, rigging ships, shifting large spars, masts, sails, &c.; dealing with any conceivable kind of wreck; making jury rudders, rafts, and so on; the management of mortar and rocket lines in case of the stranding of the vessel. He must also understand signalling, so as to know at a glance the character, and, in many cases, the meaning of signals made without the signal-book. It is amusing to an outsider to see the certainty with which candidates tell the subject-matter, if not the exact meaning, of "a hoist" of two, three, or four flags shown by the examiner. Not least important is the searching examination he will undergo as to the "rule of the road at sea." It were well if these rules were as well observed as they are accurately known. Lastly, he is examined as to the pilotage, lights, buoys, beacons, shoals, and mutual bearings of places of some one channel or sea with which he is most familiar; the English and Irish seas being those most generally proposed. This summary of the principal heads of the examination, which is carried out very conscientiously, will be satisfactory to those who look to see



our mercantile navy keep pace with the general educational improvement of the present day.'

While an adequate knowledge of practical navigation is already secured, so far as it is possible, by examination, there is, as it has been pointed out, among a large number of our merchant officers a most regrettable ignorance of modern languages and commercial affairs. If it is in contemplation at the Board of Trade to increase the stringency of their tests, these additional subjects should certainly be included, and candidates should be allowed the option of taking them up in lieu of additional mathematics.

The principle of insisting on a test by examination has been already accepted, and it is equally justifiable to raise the standard if it can be shown that we fail, with the present limited requirements, to obtain competent officers for the higher commands. Under the existing rules the captains even of the largest ships are unequal in point of character and skill. A higher examination would tend to secure more uniform excellence.

The laxity of our present system was severely criticised by Mr. McCulloch in a note appended to his edition of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*: 'Among the drawbacks to which our commercial marine has been, and continues to be, subject, the most formidable appears to be the frequent incompetence of the masters, and the prevalence of intemperance among them and the crews. To obviate the first of these evils it has been attempted, conformably to the policy adopted in some other countries, to subject all parties seeking to be employed as masters of ships to a previous examination, in the view of ascertaining their capacity properly to discharge the important duties incident to such employment. And this examination, were it conducted by thoroughly qualified parties, and made sufficiently stringent, would raise alike the character and the skill of the masters. But we doubt whether either of these conditions be realised under the existing system. Masters with certificates have sometimes exhibited great want of seamanship; and the punishment attached to the neglect of duty appears in most cases to be extremely inadequate. The difficulties inseparable from all attempts to interfere in such matters are, however, of the most formidable description.'

Every effort should be made to nominate sailors to fill those appointments in the gift of the Government for which nautical men are qualified. The superintendents of merchant shipping offices should be retired captains. The sailors of Sunderland, in their petition to Parliament in 1875, complain that 'the system of appointing men to be superintendents of mercantile marine offices who, not

Appoint-  
ments  
under Go-  
vernment.

being brought up at sea, are ignorant of all nautical matters, is an injustice to the seaman, as the superintendent is frequently called upon to decide matters in dispute between a master and his men which none but a trained nautical man can elucidate.' At the Board of Trade all the professional officers of the Marine Department ought to have had experience at sea. It is satisfactory to know that several highly-qualified captains are being appointed as principal surveyors for the Board of Trade at the outports. This is a step in the right direction. We do not want more legislation in order to secure the utmost attainable safety of life at sea. Our aim should rather be to secure a better administration of the laws which Parliament has already enacted. This object will be achieved if we put the right men in the right place, and appoint a few of our most experienced sea officers to watch over the lives of seamen.

Consular  
service.

The consular service offers another most appropriate sphere of employment for well-educated merchant officers. At the seaports the greater part of the business of a consul consists of transactions with shipping which could be more expeditiously and satisfactorily settled by an officer of nautical experience than by a landsman, who knows nothing of the sea. The extent of the patronage to which these observations apply, will be appreciated on a perusal of the tabular statement (page 231).

In concluding these remarks, I would again refer to the great importance of securing for the merchant service of this country a well-qualified body of officers. The master of a merchant vessel, having the property and lives of many individuals under his absolute control, should be a person of the highest integrity, of scientific culture, no less than an experienced seaman.

Consul  
Ryan,  
Para.

'The masters of nearly all the Northern ships,' wrote Consul Ryan from Para in 1843, 'Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Prussians, Dutch, Russians, &c., at least once a day read prayers on board, while such pious acts are of very rare occurrence, even on Sundays, on board British ones; and in France I have experienced that the drunken habits of British seamen far exceed that of those of any other country. Their general character is also much more intolerant than is manifest in any of the others, and hence they get more frequently into disputes with foreigners.'

Sir J.  
Crowe.

'With the schoolmaster abroad,' wrote Consul Crowe, 'and competition rife on every side, it is not sufficient that the master is conversant with navigation and seamanship; his education must extend a little further, his intellectual and religious character must be raised. If you ask why the character of the Norwegian and Swedish





commercial marine has been rising, commune with masters of their merchant ships, and the mystery will be revealed. Just in proportion to their education their real moral worth, and their general knowledge of the world, will they be found to rank in the merchant's good books; and just as they rank there will they be found to rank everywhere, at home and abroad.'

Captain  
Toynbee.

'I could fill volumes,' says Captain Toynbee, 'with complaints of the incompetency and sensuality of seamen. My answer is that I expect them. You might as well hope to put your head into the fire, and not be burned, as to keep any class of human beings good without education. How can you expect men to do right who spend eleven months cut off from all sources of enjoyment, and the twelfth surrounded by the strongest temptations to sin? The shipowner and captain, who do nothing for the mental welfare of their seamen, have forgotten the most important part of their ship's outfit.'

We want good officers, not only for the protection of life and property, but also to secure for the seamen judicious commanders. Though cruelty may be of rare occurrence, it is not absolutely unknown on board ship. There are ancient, and now I should hope worn-out, traditions of tyranny in the Navy. If it exists at all, it is to be found in a few unhappy merchantmen. The more we raise the tone of the officers of that service, the more certain it is that cases of harsh treatment will no longer occur.

The appointment of an ignorant man to the command of a ship must lead to a want of discipline, and to a loss of that prestige which can only be established amongst subordinates who feel that their commander is their superior alike in fact and in name.

Remarks of  
Mr. Lindsay  
on the  
responsi-  
bilities of  
masters.

'Upon the character of the master,' says Mr. Lindsay in his *History of Merchant Shipping*, 'and the course of conduct he pursues, depend in a great measure the character and success of the ship and the conduct of the other officers and men. He has a power and an influence, both direct and indirect, which may be the means of much good and much evil. If he is profane, passionate, tyrannical, indecent and intemperate, more or less of the same qualities will spread themselves or break out among officers and men; which would have been checked if the head of the ship had been a man of high personal character. He may make his ship almost anything he pleases, and may render the lives and duties of his officers and men pleasant and profitable to them, or may introduce disagreements, discontent, tyranny, resistance; in fact, he may make the situation of everyone on board as uncomfortable as can well be imagined. Every master of a vessel who lays this to heart, and considers the

greatness of his responsibility, may not only be a benefactor to all those whom the course of many years' command will bring under his authority, but may render a service to that very important part of the community to which he belongs, and do much to raise the character of the merchant navy. We have had many instances in the British mercantile marine of the variable and opposite qualification of masters.'

Without competent officers to command them the stoutest ships must be disabled or destroyed. Under the most stringent system of laws for the survey and loading of the merchant shipping, inefficiency on the part of the commander would lead to disaster. In this highly civilised and fully-peopled country we hear from the younger members of our over-crowded professions a cry almost of despair at the hopelessness of their career. The barriers which formerly prevented men of birth and station from engaging in business have been thrown down, and in the counting-houses of the City and the West End men are to be found who formerly would have thought it beneath them to seek an occupation outside the army, the navy, or the learned professions. Surely the command of one of our noble merchantmen affords at least as fine a career for men of spirit, character, and education as any of those miscellaneous employments which have lately come into vogue.

Efficient  
officers the  
best gua-  
rantee for  
safety.

The elevation of the officers of our mercantile marine, professionally, morally, and socially, would not be the least of the advantages to be anticipated from a more intimate connection between the Navy and the Reserves. On the seamen of our mercantile marine a highly-qualified body of officers might confer immense benefits.

On board a ship bound on a distant foreign voyage the captain becomes responsible for something more than the mere performance of the duties strictly belonging to his profession. There is no position more full of responsibility, none in which there are greater opportunities of doing good or harm, than that of a commander of a merchantman. In distant seas, far removed from the control of public opinion, a sea captain has unlimited powers of raising or lowering the character of his crew, and of alleviating or aggravating the inevitable hardships of their lot. The honour of the country is often in his charge. Our sailors are the pioneers of civilisation. It is from their character and conduct that semi-barbarous peoples form their first impressions of our nation. The officers on whom such great responsibilities devolve deserve the best education it is in our power to bestow.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## POWER OF BRITISH SHIPOWNERS TO COMPETE WITH FOREIGNERS.

Shipowners  
have been  
too de-  
sponding.

It has been contended that we can neither build nor sell ships as cheaply as the shipowners of Northern Europe, and that our trade is passing away into the hands of foreigners. These assertions are not new, and need not cause alarm. In his second volume Mr. Lindsay reminds us that Sir Josiah Child defended the Navigation Laws in 1665, on the ground that the Danes and Swedes would in a few years carry off the whole trade by reason of the difference of cost of building the requisite ships there and in this country. An English ship would cost 8*l.* a ton, a Danish ship half the amount.

Mr. Lindsay's Com-  
mittee,  
1860.

The same discouragement prevailed when the repeal of the Navigation Laws was first proposed. It was to an examination of statements brought forward by desponding shipowners in 1860, that the inquiry of Mr. Lindsay's Committee was directed. After an elaborate investigation, the alleged inability of the English shipowner to compete with foreigners could not be sustained, and an equally careful comparison of facts at the present time would bring all unprejudiced friends to a similar conclusion.

Cost of  
Norwegian  
ships.

Among the witnesses examined by Mr. Lindsay I would especially refer to Mr. J. Crowe, our Consul-General in Norway. Having been invited to collect information as to the cost of building ships in Norway, he prepared a full report in answer to the interrogatories which had been addressed to him. 'Great fears,' he said, 'were entertained and had frequently been urged, that owing to the cheapness of the Norwegian ships, and the low cost at which they were navigated, our vessels never could compete with them. But these assertions were wholly fallacious. A British ship could not compete with the timber-carrying ships between Norway and Great Britain, but such ships were fit for nothing else save the carriage of timber and coals in the summer months.' He referred to charters, which were offered to return Norwegian vessels to carry rails for the Norwegian Trunk Railway. Not a single Norwegian ship would



venture to carry rails, and the consequence was that British tonnage was employed. The firm, with which my father was connected, were the constructors of the railway from Christiania to the Lake Miosen, and I can therefore vouch for the authenticity of Mr. Crowe's information. He concludes by stating that 'a Norwegian first-class vessel built for the long voyages, and to be equal and fit to compete with the British, cannot be built for less. The hull is built in Norway, she is then sent to England to be coppered and fitted out. The repeal of the Navigation Laws has tended to equalise the cost of construction, as well as the rate of wages, not only on the longer voyages, but even the home trade and short voyages have been affected by it.'

Mr. Lamport was of the same opinion, that British shipbuilders could build first-class ships as cheaply as they could be built in any country.

Mr. Bayley, the principal surveyor to Lloyd's Register in Liverpool, stated to Mr. Lindsay's Committee that the question had been several times before him in the course of his practice, and that the general result had been that foreign ships of first-class quality were as expensive as ships of the same class built in England. The Committee reported that 'all the evidence they had obtained went to prove that, when every point was duly taken into consideration, the first cost of building vessels was as large in this country as in any other; while it is an undoubted fact that iron steamers can be built in the United Kingdom at much less comparative expense, and are greatly superior to any produced abroad. Indeed, by indisputable statistics it appeared that British-built ships, both sailing vessels and steamers, were in considerable request by foreigners, and that even the Swedes and Norwegians had recourse to our markets for the purchase of ships.'

In investigating some years ago the comparative producing power of labour in England and abroad, the author obtained information, which was published in his essay on *Work and Wages*, as to the relative cost of shipbuilding on the Continent in 1870. A difference of at least 10 per cent. was established in favour of the English shipbuilders, both for steamers and first-class sailing ships. The published returns for 1873 show that during that year 210 sailing and 96 steam ships were built in this country for foreign or colonial ship-owners.

First-class  
ships as  
cheap in  
England.

Frequent and protracted intervals of depression have occurred, and will recur, in the shipbuilding trade of this country. Such occasional relaxations of activity must inevitably follow those spasmodic

periods of inflation, when capitalists are inspired with an uncontrollable mania for over-production in shipping as in all other branches of trade and industry. Shipowners, however, with capital at their command, may build ships in these intervals of cheapness, at prices which builders would only accept in a period of exceptional depression.

The unequalled resources of this country for the building and working of steamships, and the vigorous enterprise of our shipowners, have led to the development of steam shipping at a more rapid rate with us than it has attained in any other country.

Advantages of  
England in  
building  
steamers.

Rash  
speculation.

In the building and working of steamers England possesses advantages over every other country in the world. The depreciations and fluctuations which have already taken place, and will not seldom recur, are the inevitable consequence of the irrepressible enterprise of the country. A certain Ocean Mail Company could be named, in whose various fortunes the writer has a lively interest, which furnishes a striking illustration of the spirit of reckless speculation. The company had enjoyed a brilliant but brief career, and the shares had risen to a disproportionate premium; but this prosperity was not destined to endure. Intoxicated with success, the management determined in a breath to double the sailings of the company's steamers between Liverpool and the ports on the west coast of South America. Within a period of twelve months they built two steamers of 5,000 tons each, four of 4,000 tons, three of 2,500 tons, and two others. It was soon found that the fleet had outgrown the requirements of the trade, and ten of the noble vessels thus hastily and imprudently constructed at a cost of 1,000,000*l.* have been peacefully reposing ever since they were launched on the unruffled waters of the Birkenhead Docks. Here we have a striking illustration of the impetuosity with which Englishmen embark in every kind of enterprise, and of the misfortunes they bring upon themselves. That was a true saying of George Herbert's, 'Much money makes a country poor, for it sets a dearer price on everything.' Foreigners are generally more cautious; but while they thus escape the penalty of rashness, they lose the advantages which can only be secured by more adventurous spirits. The present development of British trade could never have been attained unless our mariners and our merchants had been prompt to seize every favourable opening into new fields of commerce.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## SUPPLY OF SEAMEN IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

DIFFICULT as it often is to find a satisfactory crew for a British ship, there is reason to believe that we have a more ample supply of seamen than many of our maritime rivals. Unquestionably we are better off in this regard than the Germans or the shipowners of the United States.

In France the system of maritime conscription has been brought to almost mechanical perfection, and 172,000 men between the ages of eighteen and fifty are inscribed on the rolls. It would, however, appear from a statement made by the late much-lamented Captain Goodenough, at a recent discussion at the United Service Institution, that all the men liable to the maritime conscription in France are not deep-water sailors. The great majority are merely fishermen. They have had no experience in large ships until they enter the Navy. It is not intended to imply a doubt of their value as a naval reserve. On the contrary they possess many admirable qualities.

Mr. Cripperton, in a recent consular report, says of the Breton fishermen on the French coast, that 'their race forms the admirable sailors of whom France is justly proud. Austere in their faith, full of trust in Providence, dauntless in danger, patient in suffering, bearing deep love but also profound hate, ever ready to lay down their lives when duty or affection requires, they form an admirable light to the shades adverted to in speaking of other classes of the French labouring population.'

France.  
Mr. Cripperton on Breton fishermen.

It would appear, nevertheless, that the conscription does not always furnish the French Navy with men well adapted to the service. In his charming volume, *La Marine d'autrefois*, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière gives a graphic description of the crew of a ship of war, in which he formerly served, and he adds some remarks on the French system of recruiting for their Navy which merit attention:—'L'équipage de "l'Aurore" était composé de conscrits, qui n'avaient jamais vu la mer, et de négriers, qui l'avaient battue dans

Admiral Jurien de la Gravière.



tous les sens. . . . Nous avons appris à tirer parti de ce mode de recrutement, mais il a fallu de grands soins, et si nous avons réussi à pallier les inconvénients d'un système qui nous était imposé par l'insuffisance de notre population maritime, c'est surtout à bord des masses que l'on met en mouvement. Il n'en faut pas moins reconnaître que la vapeur est venue fort à propos relever la valeur de ces trop nombreux comparses.'

North  
Germany.

There are in North Germany, according to the late Captain Goodenough, about 80,000 seafaring men. In this calculation he included not merely the foreign-going seamen, but fishermen and dock labourers. The German shipowners have experienced much more serious difficulty than their competitors in this country in manning their ships. The scarcity of seamen on the coasts of the German Ocean and the Baltic is so great that laden ships are sometimes detained for weeks from the impossibility of obtaining a crew. It is said that there is a growing distaste for the sea among the population on the German seaboard. As regards their moral and material condition, the German seamen employed in foreign ships are at least as unsatisfactory as the corresponding class among our own seamen. The German sailors are enticed away from their ships by the runners in the American ports as readily as the English seamen, and, like them, they fall too ready victims into the toils of the tempter, until their past earnings and all that they may be entitled to receive in advance have been expended in drunkenness and debauchery. They are then embarked for another voyage, clothes in rags, and in a state of utter destitution. If their ships are bound for England, on their arrival in port they become once more the prey of the crimps. Thus for years these German seamen make passages between England and the United States without saving a farthing. The German authorities have accordingly proposed that the payment of more than a month's advance should be prohibited, and that provision should be made for supplying outfits to seamen from slop chests on board. In the crews of ships sailing from Bremen to America in the year 1873 the deserters amounted to 15 per cent. of the total number. In Oldenburg and Stettin the seafaring population is rapidly emigrating to the United States, in order to escape the dreaded maritime conscription. According to the view of the German officials, their population on the seaboard is not sufficiently industrious to take up the hazardous employment of fishing.

It has been proposed to adopt compulsory apprenticeship as a means of increasing the supply of seamen. German shipowners,

however, are as opposed to this system as the shipowners of our own country, being of opinion that apprentices eat as much as sailors and do less work.

Training-ships have been recommended with the view of increasing the supply of seamen. General Von Stosch informed the Reichsrath that he was authorised to supply training-ships, if the maritime provinces were prepared to find the necessary funds to maintain them. This offer has been rejected, on the ground that the instruction imparted in a harbour ship is more costly and less practical than actual service at sea.

Enough will have been said to show that the *personnel* of the German merchant service is not quite so satisfactory as a writer in *Frassey's Magazine* would lead us to suppose. While giving much interesting information on other points, he scarcely does justice to our own seamen when he says that 'the German seamen are equal to the English in strength and courage, and immeasurably superior in patience, sobriety, and industry, and as a whole undoubtedly superior to the English seamen.' He adds that 'desertions are of rare occurrence in German ships, although they lie in the great cotton ports for weeks; and he attributes 'their fidelity to their engagements to the consular conventions, which give power to the German Consuls to imprison deserters.'

The introduction of foreign seamen into the national mercantile marine is not confined to British ships. In the United States a large proportion of foreigners are employed, not only in private, but in public vessels, and yet the tonnage of that country has not, like our own, been rapidly increasing.

Foreigners  
in Ameri-  
can ships.

The difficulty arising from the abandonment of the system of compulsory service has been as keenly felt in America as in England. The report of the Secretary of the United States Navy for the year 1869 shadows forth a scheme, based upon principles identical with those which have been so strongly advocated in these pages.

Secretary  
of United  
States  
Navy.

'It becomes necessary,' writes Mr. Robeson, 'that some means should be devised to bring the seamen in this country to its protection in time of war. The people would not object to the payment of suitable bounties, and making proper provision for the family of the sailor, provided the Government could certainly secure their services when required.'

'By adopting, as far as practicable, a system of registry and enrolment for active and reserve seamen, induced, if need be, by a liberal periodical advance of clothing and money, and by bounties when necessary, we may do much towards the speedy restoration of

the *personnel* of our Navy; and, by adding to this a regular system of training for petty officers and first-class seamen, its ancient prestige and glory may be increased.'

The Secretary of the Navy has disclosed in his report for 1870, with perfect candour, the present inefficient condition of the United States Navy, which he characterises as being at a 'low ebb.'

'We have,' he says, 'neglected to educate a competent body of American seamen. Those waifs of the ocean, who have no love of country or feeling of attachment for the flag, now so exceed and preponderate in the United States Navy over the class known as "old men-of-war's men," as to impart a very undesirable character to the service.'

In order to improve the *morale* of the Navy, he desires to raise up a new class for warrant and petty officers, and to have a large reserve always ready for emergency.

'During the late war the Navy of the United States required some 60,000 men. Bounties were paid at the rate of from 50*l.* to 60*l.* per man, exclusive of advances made on pay, and local and State bounties. In some cases nearly 200*l.* have been paid for a single seaman. Out of about 35,000 men serving afloat, 19,000 were landsmen, and this was exclusive of the Marines. Of course, this was all well enough so far as mere gun-drill or service in inland waters was concerned; but these men were not sailors in any sense, and had the Confederates possessed a Navy, the results of our system might have proved very unpleasant.'

Report,  
1874.

The report of the Secretary of the United States Navy for 1874 contains the following observations by the chief officer of the Bureau of Equipment:—'Every year's experience in enlisting men for the national service makes the necessity more apparent for providing by law for the establishment of a system of apprenticeship adapted to the wants of the Navy.'

Our Consuls confirm, from an independent point of observation, the impression conveyed by the Secretary of the Navy as to the difficulty of procuring seamen. They tell us that the American ship-masters complain that the character and class of their seamen have very much deteriorated, and that no man, unless he is obliged to do so, or who can make a living by any other pursuit, will go to sea.

Report,  
1875.

The report issued by the Secretary of the United States Navy in December 1875 gives the latest information as to the supply of seamen for the Navy:—

'The department has deemed it advisable to resume the enlistment of boys, to serve till reaching twenty-one years of age, under



the existing laws enacted for that purpose. The great want of intelligent native-born seamen to man our vessels has been seriously felt of late years, and it becomes a measure of national importance to remedy this evil. Other nations have felt the growing scarcity of good seamen to man their navies, and are attempting, by establishing schools and training-ships in their ports, to provide for the education and training of boys to become sailors. It is said that England turns out yearly 3,000 boys from her training-ships to her Navy. Some efforts have formerly been made under the laws of Congress to enlist boys as apprentices, but they have failed, owing partly to the very elaborate system of education and training adopted, and partly to the fact that inducements were held out to the boys which could not be realised. Under the present system, which is purely experimental, about 250 have been enlisted and placed on board training vessels, where they receive an elementary English education, and are initiated in all the duties of sailors on a man-of-war.

‘The object of the system adopted is solely to make the boys good and intelligent sailors for the Navy, without attempting to prepare them for any higher grade. The chief of the Bureau of Equipment, &c., reports very favourably of the progress of the experiment, and asks for the enactment of a law authorising the enlistment of 500 boys, with an outfit of \$50 to each, which recommendation I earnestly recommend for the favourable consideration of Congress.’

In Austria the number of seamen, and the rules of maritime conscription, are nearly the same as in Germany. Italy possesses a maritime population of 225,000, chiefly fishermen, though a great number man the Genoese barques in the general carrying trade. Compulsory maritime service is neither successful nor popular in Italy.

The capability of the Turks for service in the Navy, the creation of which was the most costly and most useless extravagance of the late Sultan, is not rated very highly by Admiral de la Gravière in the work from which I have already quoted. He says:—‘*Les Turcs sont le peuple le moins marin qui soit au monde : ils sont à eux seuls coupables de plus d’abordages que toutes les autres nations qui se donnent rendez-vous dans le Bosphore.*’ The result of this brief survey of the condition of those maritime nations which have devoted the most earnest efforts to the formation of a Navy, must be reassuring to an English observer. In a protracted naval war our

mercantile marine would furnish to the fighting navy incomparable and unanticipated resources. To quote Admiral de la Gravière once more, 'Les couches qui renferment les véritables richesses de la Grande-Bretagne sont profondes: elle ne les exploite point dès le premier jour. L'Angleterre a ses escadres de paix: ne jugez pas par là de sa puissance.'

## CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW BEST TO IMPROVE AND KEEP UP THE SEAMEN OF THE  
COUNTRY.

*Being a Summary of the preceding Chapters, originally published as a Lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institution, February 18, 1876. Admiral Sir Hastings Yelverton, G.C.B., in the chair.*

THE following chapter gives a general summary of the subjects which have been already treated in detail in the preceding chapters. It is a republication of a lecture delivered at the request of the Council, in the theatre of the United Service Institution, on the 18th February, 1876.

It will be my object in the present paper to be practical. There has of late been too much vague declamation as to the decay of our British seamen. Foreign  
seamen.

I do not, therefore, propose to dwell at length on the faults of our sailors; I shall prefer to occupy your time with proposals for ameliorating their condition, their character, and their seamanship.

It will be convenient to clear the difficult path before us by stating the number of foreigners employed and the annual waste of seamen in our merchant service. With regard to the number of foreigners employed under the British flag, while the proportion is, no doubt, considerable, the number does not increase. The proportion of foreigners to British seamen, which was 12·6 in 1864, was reduced to 10·87 in 1873. I may in this place observe that some of the ablest of our shipowners have entertained the opinion that foreigners are an indispensable element in our merchant service. To quote only one authority, this opinion was expressed by Mr. Lamport, in giving evidence before Mr. Lindsay's Committee in 1860. He was asked, 'What, in your opinion, would have been the present state of things, had the Navigation Laws not been repealed?' He replied, 'I think there would have been more British tonnage afloat



than there is now, but I do not think we should have been able to man our British ships with British sailors.' 'The rate of wages must have been tremendous, in order to bring this about.'

Annual loss  
of seamen.

It has been computed that, from various causes—death, drowning, desertion, the giving up of employment at sea in order to obtain occupation on shore—our mercantile marine loses every year about 16,000 men. The apprenticeship supplies about 3,500 men per annum, and the training-ships probably as many more. The boys not apprenticed, and the ordinary seamen, supply the remaining 9,000 men.

As a matter of fact, no great difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the number of men required for the merchant service. The quality may have been unsatisfactory, but the number has been adequate. Our shipowners have never experienced the difficulty which has been felt in Germany, where laden ships have been detained for weeks, because a crew could not be obtained.

In a recent communication to the *Times*, Mr. Dunlop, a large shipowner, of Glasgow, states that no shipowner finds any difficulty at the present time in manning his vessel; and that, if the number of seamen were materially increased, it could only produce a redundancy.

Have our  
seamen de-  
teriorated?

Having shown that there is no reasonable ground for a complaint of deficiency in point of number, we have now to consider the allegations as to the want of discipline and seamanship.

It may be pointed out, *in limine*, that the same complaints have been urged before every Royal Commission and Committee of Parliament which has been appointed, since the termination of the great continental war, to inquire into maritime affairs.

As on all similar occasions in the past, so in the latest inquiry by the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships, witness after witness dilated on the profligacy, the drunkenness, the physical, the professional, and the moral deterioration of our seamen. The mercantile marine is acknowledged to be the true backbone of the fighting Navy, and those who heard the gloomy story could scarcely suppress a misgiving that England had forfeited her claim to be the mistress of the seas.

When, however, we turn over the page of history, we find that the crews even of our fighting vessels have often contained a large proportion of ill-conducted and unskilful men. Many seamen serving in the Royal Navy in the early years of the present century, unwilling captives of the press-gang, were equally destitute of patriotism and fidelity. It has been said that, on one occasion, when the fleet

was being paid off at Portsmouth, a large number of the seamen refused to come on shore, and sailed direct to Brest to take service in the French fleet. The narrative of the capture of the British frigate 'Macedonia' by the American frigate 'United States,' in James's *Naval History*, contains some remarkable details, which I shall venture to quote:—

'The great proportion of British seamen among the crew of the American frigate accounted, it is said, for so many of her guns being named after British ships, and some of the most celebrated British naval victories. "Captain Carden," says Mr. Marshall, "observing 'Victory' painted on the ship's side over one port, and 'Nelson' over another, asked Commodore Decatur the reason of so strange an anomaly; he answered: 'The men belonging to those guns served many years with Lord Nelson, and in the "Victory." The crew of the gun named "Nelson" were once bargemen to that great chief, and they claim the privilege of using his illustrious name in the way you have seen.' The Commodore also publicly declared to Captain Carden that there was not a seaman in his ship who had not served from five to twelve years in a British man-of-war."'

Passing on to the inquiries by the Manning Committee in 1853, the advantages, if any there were, of compulsory apprenticeship should have been conspicuously shown in the high discipline of the mercantile marine at that period. What, however, was the language held by the shipowners in regard to their crews? It was most unfavourable. The chairman of the London shipowners, Mr. Phillips, went so far as to declare that the seamen were a demoralised race, and that the permission to man British ships with foreign seamen would be productive of great good.

I am not attempting to deny that many of our merchant seamen are unworthy of the British flag, but when we are told that their condition is worse than it was, I ask for evidence in support of this unwelcome assertion. What new circumstances have arisen to injure the character of our seamen? Some influences there must have been working for their good. In part owing to the introduction of a test examination, our merchant ships are more ably commanded than they were. Our seamen are acknowledged to be a better educated body; the ships in which they sail are greatly improved in comfort, in safety, and in speed. In the old days there were no ships which could be compared with the noble iron clippers of the present day. On the other hand, we cannot fail to recognise the injurious tendency of some of the modern changes in the constitution of the merchant service. Steamers have drawn away the best men from the foreign-

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going sailing ships. A higher rate of wages is paid in steamers, and they offer the further advantages of a shorter absence from, and a periodical return to, a home port, with superior provisions, lighter work, and better accommodation.

In the foreign trade the best men, as a consequence, have been separated from the mass employed in the sailing ships, and with a result analogous to that which followed in the French army from the formation of an excessive number of *corps d'élite*, comprising the Imperial Guard, cavalry, and artillery. When the best recruits had been picked out for all those favoured corps, the residuum which remained to form the infantry of the line was destitute alike of physical vigour and of military ardour.

Again, the growth of the large towns, which are the great *entrepôts* of our maritime commerce, has tended to the degradation of the seamen employed in the foreign trade. The temptations to vice multiply with the increasing density of the population; in the smaller towns the atmosphere is less contaminated.

It is more difficult to draw any general conclusion as to the quality of seamen than it is to ascertain the proportion which the supply bears to the demand; but the increase or reduction in the number of men employed in proportion to a given tonnage, supplies a rough arithmetical test by which the efficiency of the crews can be partly determined. If this test be applied, it will be found that there is no evidence to show that there has been a deterioration in the quality of the seamen.

In 1814, the merchant service gave employment to 173,000 men, or about the same number of men as in 1861; while in the same period the tonnage of our shipping had increased from 2,681,000 to 5,895,000 tons. The proportion of men to 100 tons in sailing ships was 4.17 in 1854, 3.25 in 1869, and 3.22 in 1873.

On the whole it would appear that our seamen have not deteriorated, though the character and seamanship of a large number among them leave much to be desired. In the coasting trade, however, there are no complaints. The vessels are manned by the owners or part owners and their families, just as they have been for many years past. Neither are there any general complaints on the part of owners of steamers. Mr. MacIver, his partner, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Wilson, of Hull, when examined by the Duke of Somerset, spoke of their men in terms of commendation; and their opinion, backed by the officials of the Board of Trade, presented a cheering contrast to the gloomy picture drawn by the owners of sailing vessels. On the other hand, in sailing ships employed in long voyages, the

crews are composed of the residuum of the seamen—men too often without homes, and without characters to lose, careless and reckless, as they have ever been, without the slightest spark of loyalty to their employers, and probably greatly inferior in all these respects to any class of skilled workmen on shore.

To what causes are we to ascribe these defects, and how can they be remedied? Among the causes I would enumerate:—(1.) The absence of encouragements or pecuniary reward for good conduct or skilful seamanship; (2.) Insufficiency of pay, at least, until a very recent date, and, in some ships, bad treatment; (3.) The system of payment in advance before sailing, and the delay in paying off crews on their arrival in port; (4.) The want of systematic training for seamen; (5.) The inadequate professional status of the officers of the merchant service.

Remedial  
measures.

Taking these subjects in the order in which they have been enumerated, we have first to deal with the question of wages. The owners of sailing ships stand alone among the employers of this country in expressing a universal concurrence of opinion that their men are deteriorating. The explanation is not far to seek.

Wages:

Until a very recent period, the wages of seamen have been low by comparison with the reward of any description of labour, requiring the same skill and experience, ashore.

Looking back to the earlier dates included in the tables published by the Board of Trade, we find that the wages of an able seaman rarely exceeded 50s. a month; and when we take into view the many privations of a seaman's life, the inferiority of his situation to that of any other skilled labourer was such that, unless there had been some compensating circumstances, our ships could not have been manned.

There are two considerations which together have operated to keep down the wages of the seamen. The apprenticeship to the sea has been less expensive than the apprenticeship to any other skilled trade. 'The fact,' says Mr. Mill, 'that a course of instruction is required of even a low degree of costliness, or that the labourer must be maintained for a considerable time from other sources, suffices everywhere to exclude the great body of the labouring people from the possibility of such competition.'

Boys, from the moment they go afloat, cease to be an expense to their parents; hence the poorest among the labouring class, who, alas! form the majority, are able to bring up their sons to the sea.

Again, the employment of the sailor has been ill-paid, because it has been invested with all the charms which belong to an adventurous



life. 'The dangers,' says Adam Smith, 'and hairbreadth escapes of a life of adventures, instead of disheartening young people, seem frequently to recommend a trade to them. A tender mother among the inferior ranks of the people is often afraid to send her son to a school at a seaport town, lest the sight of the ships and the conversation and adventures of the sailors should entice him to go to sea. The distant prospect of hazards from which we can hope to extricate ourselves by courage and address is not disagreeable to us, and does not raise the wages of labour in any employment.'

Non ulla laborum

O virgo, nova mi facies, inopinave surgit :

Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.

In pointing out that in foreign-going sailing-ships generally, and especially in those which have been the property of men of limited capital, the wages have not been sufficient to attract good men into the employment, I do not imply that there has been a selfish unwillingness on the part of the shipowners to do justice to the seamen. I am simply pointing out that the conditions offered have been less attractive than those presented by other employments.

Quite recently the wages of seamen have been advanced, doubtless in consequence of the competition for labour, caused by the unprecedented activity of other branches of trade. It cannot now be said that the seaman is insufficiently rewarded. The rapid advance in the rate of pay which has lately taken place will in time produce its effect, and probably encourage a large number of the youth of this country to look for employment afloat. Seamen, however, cannot be made in a day. The benefits to be derived from the increased supply of trained men will not be realised until the boys, who are now being attracted to the sea, have had sufficient time to learn their business.

Dietary.

Bad treatment has been assigned as one of the reasons why in some vessels a difficulty has been experienced in regard to manning. Whenever it has been alleged that the scale of provisions in any ships in the merchant service is insufficient, universal indignation has been expressed by shipowners. In order, therefore, to prove that there is a foundation for what has been stated, I quote the following passage from the report of Dr. Roe, surgeon to the British Seamen's Hospital at Callao, in answer to a circular issued from the Board of Trade by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre :—

'By far the greater number of British vessels which visit this port are those which have made long voyages ; they have taken

cargoes to some port in China, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, the East Indies, or elsewhere, and they have come on here to load with guano, having been on the average upwards of a year in performing the voyage from England to Callao. Amongst the crews of the vessels desertions are very frequent, the principal causes being—

- ‘1. The physical condition of the seamen.
- ‘2. The fact that a considerable sum of money is due to each man on his arrival here.
- ‘3. The system prevailing at this port of paying three months’ wages in advance to each man who ships.

‘At the British hospital, in the four years commencing 1st of October, 1865, and ending 30th of September, 1869, 251 cases of scurvy were received from 57 vessels, 27 ships sending each but a single case, and 13 ships sending each nine cases and upwards. Official investigations were instituted into the circumstances attendant on the voyages of 13 of the vessels, the crews of which were affected by scurvy, and our inquiries have established the inadequacy of this diet to maintain the health of seamen, even when supplemented by the antiscorbutics enforced by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1867, as scurvy occurred in those vessels only in which the scale was adhered to.

‘The following scale will show the comparative values of different articles of food as antiscorbutics:—

Powerful antiscorbutics	Indifferent antiscorbutics	Powerless as antiscorbutics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fresh juicy vegetables, as raw potatoes, onions, &amp;c.</li> <li>2. Fresh fruits, as oranges, apples.</li> <li>3. Fruits and vegetables, preserved in sugar, or otherwise, with their juices.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dried vegetable matter, as preserved potatoes, compressed vegetables, &amp;c.</li> <li>2. Fresh or preserved meats, especially within the tropics.</li> <li>3. Vinegar. Lime-juice as found on board merchant ships after 12 months’ voyage.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rice, barley, sago, arrowroot, &amp;c.</li> </ol>

‘The salt beef and salt pork constitute the main articles of a seaman’s food, and are supposed to represent an amount of nourishment which they are far from containing. Scurvy is essentially starvation. The histories of such cases as proved fatal on board the ships, and they were not a few, showed that those who laboured longest and hardest were the first to die. Officers and others, who were not required to use physical exertion, escaped the disease. One man was a prisoner, and fed on bread and water during a voyage of

upwards of ninety days; he took scarcely any exercise, and for a considerable portion of the time never moved from his cell; he arrived here in good health and without a trace of scurvy, whereas all his shipmates were more or less severely affected.'

'The great majority of the cases of scurvy recorded above originated in vessels, the crews of which were not allowed vegetables whilst the ships were in port. Let it be assumed that the expense of providing food better adapted to maintain the health of the men would be greater than the expense of providing food according to the scale now in use. The food supplied is but a part of the seamen's wages, part of the value paid for their services. If, therefore, more value be given to the seamen in food, less will be required in money; and no wages will be better appreciated by the seamen than good food.'

I earnestly hope that all the suggestions contained in the letter of Dr. Roe may be adopted.

Advance  
note.

The system of making advances of wages to seamen is a subject closely connected with the general question of the rate of pay. I cordially concur with the Royal Commission in their unhesitating condemnation of the advance note. Seamen are the only class of working men who are paid in advance for labour that has not been performed. It may be urged that it is hard to deny a small sum in advance to a man who is about to embark on a ten months' voyage. It may be said that he has an outfit to provide and expenses to pay for his board on shore while seeking an engagement. The answer is, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the money paid in advance is consumed in debauchery; that the man comes on board destitute of clothes, but minus the month's wages. He has discounted his advance note at a usurious rate of interest, and has probably been paid not in money but in the most deleterious liquors. The crimp alone has derived a profit on the transaction.

Who buys a minute's mirth to wait a week?  
Or sells eternity to get a toy?

Some shipowners have strongly opposed the abolition of the advance note. They have been accustomed to rely on the co-operation of the crimp to get their men on board before sailing, and they apprehend that the abolition of the advance note will lead to a small rise in wages.

For the reasons I have stated, I disagree with the objections to the reform proposed by the Royal Commission. Until seamen are taught to depend on their past earnings, to be sufficiently careful of



the large sums often received on paying off, so as to be able to provide therefrom the kit required for the next voyage, you cannot look for improvement in their moral character.

The delay in paying off is at least as fruitful of evil as the payment of wages in advance. If a delay of forty-eight hours occurs after the arrival of a ship in dock, the seamen are necessarily thrown into the hands of the crimps. True it is that Sailors' Homes have been established at the large ports, and they have done great good: but after all, the Sailors' Home bears a close resemblance to an embellished prison, and is not the genial and attractive hostel to which a sailor would naturally resort, who has been cribbed, cabined, and confined under tight discipline for many months on board ship. I believe our Sailors' Homes are constructed on a wrong principle. They should be smaller, more numerous, and less severe in their aspect and management. 'Far,' said Mr. Baker, in his letter to Lord John Cavendish, 'from taking away its value, everything which makes virtue accessible, simple, familiar, and companionable, makes its use more frequent, and its reality a deal less doubtful.' Captain Dawson has enlarged in a recent paper in such sympathetic language on the necessity for an immediate settlement of wages after the arrival of a ship, that I need not insist further on this point.

Delay in  
paying off.

I would offer one more suggestion connected with the question of wages which ought not to be omitted in a general review of this subject, although it is not within the province of legislation to remedy the evil which I seek to point out.

Surely it is a mistake in the merchant service to pay every seaman before the mast at the same rate. By preserving this unbroken uniformity, you may, it is true, avoid the risk of exciting envy and jealousy among the crew; but, on the other hand, you give no encouragement under such a system to special exertion and good conduct. You draw no distinction between efficiency and utter inexperience, between the genuine able seaman and the man who has no right to claim that rating. Piece-work is impossible on board ship; at least on board ships engaged in the foreign trade. On a coasting voyage, as, for example, in the colliers plying between the north-eastern ports and the Thames, the plan of paying by the run was universal, but this arrangement is inapplicable to the Indian or the colonial trade. If, however, payment by results cannot be introduced, it becomes the more essential to encourage merit by a flow of promotion, and by advantages in point of pay. In the numerous ratings in the Royal Navy we have an example of what

Uniform  
pay.

may be done in this direction. The regulations of the Navy in this and all other matters are well worthy of study by shipowners. They represent the traditions of an ancient service, and the thoughts of many ingenious and capable men, whose business it has been to maintain the discipline and to animate the exertions of large bodies of men.

Examina-  
tion for  
A.B.

There should be a voluntary examination for the rating of A.B. The examination should be practical and interlocutory, similar to that which candidates for admission to the Naval Reserve are required to pass. Shipowners would know that men who could obtain a certificate of A.B. by examination, were not impostors; and captains ought to be allowed by their owners to give higher wages to certificated men. As soon as it became known that something was to be gained by passing an examination, every seaman would try to pass. It might then be expedient to require that a man should have passed the examination before he was allowed to ship as an able seaman.

I may mention that several Seamen's Associations have petitioned Parliament in favour of this proposal. Such a regulation would involve no hardship on the shipowner. He would be left perfectly free in the selection of his crew, and could ship as large or as small a proportion of A.B.'s as he thought fit.

Good con-  
duct pay.

Again, an increase of pay should be given for good conduct. This is done by Mr. Balfour and other shipowners of Liverpool; and Mr. Balfour, who was especially sent up to give evidence before the Commission as to the deterioration of seamen, admitted that the complaints, which he poured forth so profusely, did not apply to the men who sailed in his ships.

Hasty en-  
gagement  
of crew.

Would it not cost less, and would not the merchantmen be more efficiently manned, if higher wages were paid, fewer hands employed, and more care taken in the selection of the crew? It is a common practice with shipowners to defer the engagement of the crew until a day or two before their ships are ready to sail. The captain is then instructed to go down to the shipping office, and in an hour to collect together a crew for a voyage round the world, from among a number of men whom he has never seen before. In what other trade can a parallel be quoted to this haphazard and perilous system? Would it be reasonable to expect that the skilled labour required for a shipbuilder's yard or an engineering works could be obtained at a moment's notice by sending out a foreman into the adjacent highway? In all well-organised industrial establishments it is the custom to keep together a nucleus of workmen; and this is done even

in bad times, and when the payment of the men's wages is a heavy loss to the employer.

Here I would offer a remark on the desirability of more frequent and direct personal relations between the shipowners and their seamen. More cordial personal relations.

When shipowners complain that their seamen are not anxious to promote their employers' interests, that they show no gratitude for the care and the money, which have been freely lavished, to furnish them with good provisions, to make their forecastles comfortable, and to supply them, it may be, with books and other advantages not included in the letter of the bond, it must be remembered that mere liberality will not suffice to arouse the sentiment of personal loyalty. A non-resident proprietor may let his land at low rents, and be more than liberal in the repairs of his cottages, and yet, unless he lives among the people on his estate, he will fail to keep up the warm and devoted attachment which, in feudal times and since, has so often united together the owner and the tillers of the soil.

I have dwelt, I fear, too long on the question of wages. Except in the abolition of the advance note, and perhaps in requiring payment of a certain rate of interest for every day's delay in the settlement of wages after the arrival of the ship, the subject is beyond the scope of legislation. It is for the shipowners to consider the question, and by a wise generosity to encourage a good class of our working population to follow the sea.

It is now necessary to refer to the subject of training seamen for the merchant service. The abolition of compulsory apprenticeship has been deplored by many, and the alleged deterioration of seamen has been attributed to the relaxation of the laws by which it was enforced. We have, however, the testimony of the late Mr. Lamport and others, to show that compulsory apprenticeship led to grave abuses. There is no reason why an ordinary seaman or boy should not pick up seamanship, as well when serving in that capacity afloat as if he were regularly indentured. It is a fatal objection to the compulsory plan that boys who are worth anything are certain to break their indentures. Such, at least, has been the experience of the present training-ships. The managing committees have, therefore, determined not to ship any more boys as apprentices.

I now turn to another and a less impracticable plan for increasing the supply of seamen by the establishment of additional school-ships. Training-ships. I commence by considering the proposal in a politico-economical aspect.

An artificial training system must, if it is to produce a radical



improvement in the *personnel* of our vast merchant navy, be carried out on a very extended scale. Now, if by such an extended training system you succeed in producing a large additional number of seamen, you introduce a disturbing element into the maritime labour-market, which must have the effect of depreciating the rate of wages. But it has been already shown that the wages of seamen have, until a recent date, been lower than those earned by any other class of skilled workmen; and the inference has been drawn that the inferiority in the quality of seamen has been attributable to that cause. If, on the other hand, you limit the number of boys in training, in strict accordance with the requirements of the Naval Reserve—and the Liverpool shipowners, who are the warmest and ablest advocates of the training system, have never suggested that we should go further—then you will fail in producing any appreciable improvement in the efficiency and supply of seamen for the merchant service.

Having given my most careful consideration to this question, and having studied the various plans proposed from time to time by Sir Frederick Grey and others, I have arrived at the conclusion that the scheme projected by the Manning Committee, and approved by Sir Frederick Grey, is the only practicable plan. Any scheme for a partial contribution by the Government and the shipowners would break down, because the majority of the shipowners will not contribute voluntarily, and you cannot in fairness extort a contribution under the compulsion of law. The only reliable source to which we can look for pecuniary aid in support of training-ships is the public purse; and the State cannot be called upon to expend a sixpence more than it is necessary to lay out, in order to provide for the wants of the public service.

The plan of the Manning Commission was, as it is well known, to establish ten school-ships, distributed at the principal ports. Each ship was to be capable of receiving 200 boys, 100 of whom were to be nominated by the Admiralty and supported by the State; the remaining 100 were to be day boarders, who were to be maintained at the expense of their friends. The ships were to be moored to a quay, so as to give ready access to the shore. A commencement might be made upon the plan of the Commission by establishing a ship of the class described at a few of the principal ports. One or two might be established at Liverpool, another at Cardiff, another at Cork, another at Glasgow, and one in the Tyne. In each of these ships 100 boarders should be entered under an engagement to join the Naval Reserve. They should be trained, according to the plan of the Com-

mission, for one year, on precisely the same system now adopted on board the 'St. Vincent.' At sixteen they should go to sea in the merchant service; at twenty they should be required to join the Navy for a year, to be trained in gunnery, according to the plan sketched out by Captain Wilson in his recent lecture before this institution. In each of the school-ships there would be vacancies for 100 additional boys, who might be either boarders or day boarders. The fees for the day boarders might be paid by the Education Department. The boarders would be supported by the subscriptions of the merchants and shipowners, or by the contributions of wealthy and benevolent persons, desirous of availing themselves of the facilities afforded by the Government on behalf of poor boys in whom they might feel an interest. The number of boys in training in the school-ships at Portsmouth and Plymouth should be reduced, so that the aggregate number should not be increased by the establishment of the new training-ships at the commercial ports. If the plan succeeded, the number of naval school-ships at the commercial ports might be gradually increased.

The recent destruction by fire of the 'Warspite' and the 'Goliath' has aroused the public interest in the training-ships; and the gallantry and discipline exhibited by the youthful crews have been accepted as a proof that the training they receive is perfect in all respects. The belief has accordingly been gaining ground that the difficulty of manning the merchant service satisfactorily can be met by the multiplication of training-ships of the same class. In my judgment there could not be a greater mistake, and in that belief I am confirmed by Captain Wilson, and by many other competent authorities, whose opinions I might quote if the time at my disposal permitted. Let us acknowledge with thankfulness the good work that is being done on board these charitable, industrial, or reformatory ships. I wish God speed to the benevolent men who have sought to rescue hundreds and thousands of little children from the vile associations in which they have been born, and to bring them up to an honest calling. But let us not suppose that the low morality of our forecastles, which has been so deeply, and, alas! in too many cases so justly, deplored, can be raised by recruiting the merchant service from the pauper and criminal classes. We want to draw the great mass of our seamen from pure and untainted sources; and if we wish that our honest and self-supporting artisans should send their sons to sea, we must give them some assurance that they will not be thrown among boys of another class, with whom they would be afraid to allow them to associate on shore.

It has been already said that the training of seamen in school-ships is after all an artificial system. The open sea is the only true place for training seamen. Already the greatest difficulty is experienced in the Navy in finding ships for sending the boys trained by the Admiralty to sea.

Government  
apprentices.

I, therefore, venture to suggest a plan for encouraging shipowners to take apprentices under an engagement at the end of their apprenticeship to serve for a year in the Navy in sea-going ships, according to the plan of Sir Frederick Grey, or in barracks, according to the plan of Captain Wilson. These Government-aided apprentices should not be entered until the age of 15. At 19 they would be out of their time, and they would be only 20 at the close of their year of service in the Navy. The following scale of bounty to shipowners and apprentices is suggested for discussion. It may be premised that the ships should be of a class adapted for instructing boys in seamanship, the number of boys limited in proportion to the tonnage, and the boys themselves approved by an officer representing the Admiralty. For every apprentice so selected the shipowners should receive at the end of the first year a bonus of 15*l.*, and a further bonus might be paid to the shipowner at the end of the second year of 5*l.* In the third year the apprentice should receive a gratuity of 5*l.*, which would supplement his wages, and be an encouragement to him not to break his indentures. At the end of the fourth year, on joining the Navy, the apprentice should receive a further bonus of 10*l.* The total amount of these payments is 35*l.*, an insignificant sum in comparison with the cost of training a boy in the Navy from his enrolment until he becomes an able seaman. The seamen trained under this system would have been afloat in sea-going ships throughout their apprenticeship, and would only require drill in gunnery in order to become valuable auxiliaries to the Royal Navy.

Pension  
Fund.

The consideration of the condition of our seamen would be imperfect without some allusion to the necessity of establishing a Pension Fund. In all the other leading maritime states, provisions have been made for the maintenance of seamen in old age and in sickness. The most complete organisation for this purpose is to be found in France, where it was established by the great Colbert as a co-ordinate and essential part of his plan for compulsory service in the Navy. The institution has been maintained in its integrity to the present time.

The subject received the most ample consideration from Lord Ellenborough's Commission, who most strongly recommended the establishment of a compulsory self-supporting Seamen's Pension Fund.



The subject has been incidentally examined by the Manning Commission and Mr. Lindsay's Committee, and the proposals of Lord Ellenborough have received their warmest approbation. It has been calculated that a payment of 1*l.* a year, commencing at the age of 14, would provide a pension of 12*l.* a year at the age of 50, of 15*l.* at the age of 52, and of 18*l.* a year at the age of 55. In this calculation allowance is made for a considerable number of seceders. The Government possess in the numerous shipping offices the clerical staff necessary for carrying out the recommendations which have so often been made in favour of a Seamen's Pension Fund.

While I trust that some if not all the suggestions contained in this paper may be approved by the shipowners and the Legislature, and produce their anticipated fruits in the amelioration of the condition of our seamen, I am well aware that it is in vain to expect, by any plans for their improvement, that we can neutralise entirely the evil influences under which our seamen, from the nature of their calling, are compelled to live. The sailor boy must quit his home at a tender age, and must pass his youth amid the temptations to be found in every seaport. How much of whatever there is of good in human nature—frail it must be at the best—is derived from home influences.

We love the precepts for the teacher's sake.

In proportion as we value these blessings for ourselves, we shall sympathise with the sailor in his moral and social privations; and rejoice that among his class there are to be found so many who have escaped the contaminating influences to which they are exposed.

Having dealt with the case of seamen, I turn to the officers of the merchant service. The Duke of Somerset's Commission, following the unanimous opinion of the witnesses whom they had examined, spoke in highly favourable terms of the officers of the merchant service. They said that the Board of Trade examinations had exercised a beneficial influence in raising the standard of education and attainment in the art of navigation, and that the improvement among the officers offered a bright contrast to the deterioration among the seamen.

None will be found to dispute the general truth of these conclusions. There is reason, however, to believe that in the nautical profession many may yet be found equally unworthy in character and in knowledge to occupy the important position of a shipmaster. Several members of the consular body, in their replies to the letter of inquiry in 1872, adverted to the deficiencies of the British shipmasters,

and to their bad conduct on shore. Mr. Gould, in his Report on the British Maritime Service in the Baltic, gives some figures which show that British shipping is being gradually displaced by the Swedes and Norwegians, and he attributes their superiority in the race, not, as it might have been expected, from the general tone of the shipowners, to the faults of the seamen, but rather to the inferiority of our shipmasters. Mr. Gould specially refers to the utter ignorance of foreign languages displayed by the English, in marked contrast with the German and Scandinavian officers, all of whom have received a good commercial education, and speak English, and probably other languages in addition. Several of the Consuls allude to the insufficiency of the salaries given to officers of the merchant service. Unquestionably shipmasters are underpaid, as compared with persons of equal responsibility on shore, but the remedy lies with the parties to the bargain. The Legislature cannot interfere, and public opinion cannot do much. It is certain that there is immense competition among the more educated men before the mast for promotion to the quarter-deck; and the shipowner has a perfect right to take advantage of any turn of the market in his favour, provided always that the officers employed are equal to their work. In our own day, as in all former times, the officers of the merchant service have been a mixed and various body, including many gentlemen of high bearing and education, and at the lower end of the scale, no inconsiderable number who possess none of the qualifications necessary even for the most modest command. It is indeed unnecessary to insist on the same standard of excellence in all cases. The value of the ship and of the cargo, and the extent and difficulty of the voyage, must be taken into consideration by the shipowner in determining the amount of salary which he must give, and the qualifications which he will require in the commander of his ship. Every commander in the merchant service cannot be highly paid, but many are not so liberally rewarded as they ought to be. The illiberality of certain shipowners was severely criticised by Captain Toynbee, in his speech at the Society of Arts in their last session, when he referred to ships of 800 tons in the East India trade, where the masters were receiving only 10*l.* a month. Even in the best employment every officer below the rank of master is badly paid. The expectation of promotion is an inducement to subordinates to serve for years on a small pittance of from 4*l.* to 7*l.* a month, considerably less, in short, than the wages of the carpenter or the boatswain, who are working under their orders.

Allowing that the Government cannot do very much to elevate the professional status of the officers of the merchant service, and

that it can do nothing to increase their rate of pay, I venture to make one or two suggestions which I should be glad to see adopted by the departments concerned. The Board of Trade may raise the status and improve the qualifications of the merchant officers, by enlarging the scope of their examinations, and by giving a certificate of a superior grade to officers who could pass in one or more languages, in which a certain colloquial facility should be required. To these acquirements, commercial subjects, including, for example, the theory of foreign exchanges, and the elements of commercial law, might be added with advantage. If the good results which I venture to anticipate were to follow from the encouragement thus afforded to a wider range of study, the Board of Trade might be justified in making the higher certificates, which at first should be the reward of those who passed a voluntary examination, a necessary qualification for the command of any ship exceeding a certain tonnage.

The Admiralty might co-operate in this important work, and render a great service to the country, by requiring all officers, before they receive commissions in the Reserve, to serve on probation for a year in the Royal Navy. Here again I am only repeating a proposal already made by Captain Wilson. The advantages of such a regulation ought to be mutual. The mercantile officers would become in some degree familiar with the duties they would be called upon to perform in time of war, and the Admiralty would have an opportunity of testing the qualifications of candidates, before giving them commissions. In future, all officers before they enter the Reserve should be required to go through a three months' course of gunnery at Portsmouth; they should receive adequate pay while so employed; and if they failed to make reasonable progress, should be dismissed from the Reserve.

It would be an encouragement to nautical study, and a graceful recognition of the merchant service, if a few studentships were founded at the Naval University at Greenwich, which should be opened to competition by all officers, after four years' service at sea as mate or master of a merchant ship. They should be tenable for one year, and should be of sufficient annual value to cover the necessary expenses of the student, and give him in addition a sum equivalent to the income which he would have earned if he had been following his profession. I assume that each of the studentships would cost the Government about 120*l.* a year. Five might be offered in the first instance, one of which should be reserved for Scotland, and another for Ireland; and the number might be increased if the experiment proved a success.



The good example of the Government might probably find imitators among the merchant princes and shipowners, who would found nautical studentships, just as fellowships were founded by pious and benevolent men in ancient times at Oxford and Cambridge.

It is necessary that I should conclude. Many difficulties in the way of carrying out my latter suggestions may present themselves to the minds of naval officers, even though they are sincerely disposed to welcome as comrades and messmates the representatives of the mercantile marine. Something, however, must be done to make the resources of our maritime trade in men and ships available for the emergency of war. The maritime armaments of the great continental Powers have been developed in such vast proportions that it is only by the development of our naval strength that our country can maintain her claim to rank as a first-rate Power. Our fleets cannot, however, be increased without such additions to the estimates as the country would never tolerate in time of peace. Naval expenditure may be economised by keeping a large proportion of our officers and men on half-pay or in harbour ships, but a naval force gives a fallacious appearance of strength, unless it be kept in full efficiency by frequent employment afloat. It should, therefore, be the aim of our naval administrators to create a thoroughly reliable Reserve in the merchant service. The officers and the men of the Reserve must be made sailors in the maritime trade of the country, and they must be trained to the use of arms in the Navy. Once more, if it be true that the condition of the merchant service is not in all respects satisfactory; if you want to raise the tone and the professional standing of the merchant officers, and to improve the seamanship and to raise the character of their crews, a closer intercourse with the accomplished and high-spirited officers and well-disciplined seamen of the sister service will prove the most effectual means of accomplishing the end in view.

I began with an enumeration of the causes of the alleged deterioration of seamen; I conclude with an enumeration of the remedial measures proposed. They are:—

1. The abolition of the advance notes.
2. The shipowners to be required to allow interest in case of unnecessary delay in paying off their crews.
3. The Government to give a bonus to shipowners for apprentices, trained under suitable conditions, and under engagement to serve a year in the Navy, and afterwards to join the Reserve.
4. Training-ships under the Admiralty to be established at the commercial ports, according to the plan of the Manning Commission.

General  
con-  
clusions.

5. A compulsory self-supporting Seamen's Pension Fund to be established under the management of the Board of Trade and the guarantee of the State.

6. Voluntary examinations in modern languages and commercial subjects to be established for masters and mates ; studentships for the officers of the merchant service to be founded at Greenwich.

7. A scale of provisions to be prepared by the Board of Trade, and the ships bound on long ocean voyages to be required to be provided accordingly.

The reading of the paper was followed by a lengthened discussion. The reports of the principal speeches are reprinted from the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution.

The CHAIRMAN : Mr. Shaw-Lefevre has very kindly offered to give us a few remarks on the subject, and I will ask him to begin.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P. : I presume it is out of kind consideration to my Parliamentary duties, which may call me hence in a few minutes, that you have asked me to lead this discussion. In the presence of so many able and more distinguished persons, I have considerable hesitation in doing so ; but at all events, it gives me the opportunity of being the first to thank my friend Mr. Brassey for his extremely interesting and able paper. It shows, as all his works do, that deep study, that fairness and moderation of views, and that sense of public duty which so distinguish him. With most of his premises I most cordially agree. We have talked over the questions together on many occasions, and I think we have worked out some of them together. I agree with him in thinking that there has been great exaggeration in what has been said with regard to the deterioration of our seamen. Mr. Brassey was good enough to quote from the replies to the circulars which I issued when I was at the Board of Trade five years ago to our Consuls abroad. Those replies might, with great advantage, be compared to replies made to a similar circular issued by the Board of Trade twenty-five years previously, and if you compare those two sets of replies, you will find that many as are the complaints recently made by our Consuls, they were far greater twenty-five years ago. I think without a single exception twenty-five years ago every Consul condemned our sailors in every possible way ; but if you look at the replies which have been published in answer to the circular which I issued three years ago, you will find that though a great number of Consuls speak in very unfavourable terms of our seamen, yet a good many others speak much more favourably. My impression is, therefore, that the seamen have not deteriorated ; but I believe public attention has been much more called to the subject, that the seamen have not improved relatively so much as other classes, so that there is still too much reason to complain of their general condition. Seamen, we must recollect, are somewhat of an international class : they suffer from evils not only at home but abroad, and when we know the condition of things at places like Callao, Quebec, New York, San Francisco, and many

other ports where our seamen are brought into contact with influences of the worst character, we cannot be altogether surprised that they have not joined in the general improvement which we see in other classes. Mr. Brassey has also referred to the proportion of foreigners, and I think that he has shown that the relative number of foreigners has not so much increased as people suppose; in fact, it has somewhat diminished of late years, and I do not think there is much ground for complaint on that score. Mr. Brassey then went on to speak of the training-ships for boys, and I quite concur in what he has said about the existing training-ships in our mercantile ports. They were formed generally with a double object, the main object being to rescue boys from the streets—what are called the street Arabs. Others are reformatory ships, whose object is mainly to bring boys of that class to a somewhat better course of life. In that they have been eminently successful, but they have not been so successful in training boys to the merchant service. Captain Wilson has lately pointed out that for the most part these boys when they leave the training-ships are not physically in a condition fitting them to be entered for the naval service; and as we may presume that the merchant service requires men of equal physical condition to those of the Navy, we may conclude that these boys are not fit for the merchant service. My strong impression is, that a very large proportion of the boys that now proceed from these reformatory and training-ships are not really good material for the merchant service. At the same time I have no wish to throw any discredit upon those ships. I believe they are doing an extremely good work in training and educating boys from the criminal class to a better state of life, and I wish them every success. Another defect about them is that the boys leave the ship at too early an age. I believe for the most part they are sent from these ships at the age of fifteen. Now all experience shows that the best period for training boys for the sea, whether for the Navy or for marine service, is between fifteen and sixteen; therefore I was glad recently to see in a circular issued by the Admiralty that they make it a condition of the grant towards such boys as enter the third-class Naval Volunteers, that they shall be trained up to the age of sixteen. The period between fifteen and sixteen is really the important age for training boys for sea service, and unless you can keep the boys between those two years, I believe very little good is done. At the same time it must be admitted that there is great difficulty in getting boys between those ages. For the Navy we enter the boys at fifteen, and they remain a year or a year and a quarter on board the training-ships, and are then drafted for sea service. But my friend Lord Gilford (whom I see here) will, I have no doubt, tell us that there is no very abundant supply of boys for the Navy. It is by no means easy to get the contingent of boys required for the naval service. We require every year something like from 2,500 to 3,000 boys, and I believe at this moment the number is somewhat less; and I have a recollection of the difficulty in getting the adequate number. Then further, these boys who enter at the age of fifteen are paid by the naval service 9*l.* a year as wages, besides a free kit; and my strong impression is that if we go in for a large system of training boys



for the merchant service it will be found necessary, if you wish to retain them between the ages of fifteen and sixteen, to pay them wages. I need hardly say that that will add considerably to the expense of the operation. Whether you will get the boys at all at the late age of fifteen I rather doubt. At that age all the other employments of the country are in competition with you; if you enter at an earlier age you may get them. At thirteen or fourteen I believe you could get them for two if not for three years, as proposed by Mr. Brassey. Therefore, really one of the difficulties to be considered in establishing a system of training boys for the merchant service is what age are you to take the boys at? how long are you to keep them? what conditions are you to make with regard to their future service? and what prospects do you hold out to them of constant and proper employment? On all these points very much might be said. All I can say at present is, that though I have an inclination towards a scheme for training boys to the merchant service, I have not yet seen any scheme elaborated which I think will really hold water on those particular points. Mr. Brassey went on further to say, that in his opinion he thought it would be impossible either to get contributions from shipowners or to tax shipowners for the purpose of training boys for the service, and that the duty and obligation and charge would practically fall on the State. For my part I cannot agree with him. I do not see any more reason for the State paying the whole expense of training boys for the merchant service than for paying the expense of training boys for any other trade in the country; and it appears to me to be of the first importance that shipowners should understand that this duty should fall upon them. It may be said that the naval service may require it; but I think it is very easy to show that the naval service is quite sufficiently provided for irrespective of the boys we may train this way. I do not intend to go into the discussion that we had in this very place some time ago in regard to the entry of boys for seamen in the Navy; but I showed then that we have in the Navy sufficient men to send all possible ships that we have to sea on the outbreak of war without calling on our Reserves. In addition to that we have the Coastguard men, and some four thousand naval pensioners; but we have also twelve thousand first-class Naval Reserve men, and I think Lord Gilford will say that if these men can be obtained at the opening of war with such additional training as might be given in a few weeks or a month, they would be an extremely available class. But now, what is the possibility of the wants of the Navy at the outbreak of a war? I presume nobody supposes that you would hire sailing vessels to send to sea. What we shall want seamen for, will be to send them on board steamers. No doubt we shall have to cover the sea with steamers, carrying one or two guns each; and I presume the extreme number would be every steamer in the merchant service of this country. Now what are the number of able seamen required to man all those steamers? I recollect going into the matter with Mr. Mayo, the Registrar of Seamen, and the calculation we made after careful inquiry was that all the steamers of this country are altogether manned by about 12,000 able seamen. Well, we have 12,000 Naval Reserve men ('not for fighting'),

no doubt, but we have 12,000 Reserve men; and supposing we hired all these steamers with their crews, we should be able to place the Naval Reserve men on board, and, as I say, these steamers would not carry more than one or two guns, and a few trained men would be amply sufficient for them. Therefore I do not think there is any such claim upon the Government as would compel us to pay the expense of training boys for the merchant service. For my part, I am ready from a Governmental point of view to contribute towards the training of boys for the merchant service; but in the main I do think that the charge should fall upon the shipowners of this country. I have often heard it said that the shipowners find very great difficulty in getting men at the present day. I think Mr. Brassey has, to a great extent, shown that that impression has not a true foundation; but I would ask this question, 'Where do the yachtsmen get their men?' I have often had occasion to ask yachtsmen that question. It is a question of wages. They draw their men from a somewhat different class, from the fishermen of this country. The fishermen of this country are rather a higher class of people than the ordinary seamen. They are for the most part accustomed to fore-and-aft vessels, and are extremely useful for such vessels, and probably would be equally so for steamers; but the owners of yachts induce, by higher wages, some five or six thousand men every year to come from their fishing trade to the yachts. Now, I would ask whether shipowners, by offering better terms, could not get men from the same class? For my part, I believe the question of the supply of the merchant service is in the main a question of wages, and if shipowners give sufficient wages the men will not be wanting.

MR. DONALD CURRIE: Sir Hastings Yelverton and Gentlemen,—I had not expected to be called upon to say anything on this subject, although it is one in which every shipowner should take a very deep interest, but I will say, as briefly as possible, a word or two respecting the points brought forward by Mr. Brassey. I do not know any subject which should be more interesting or more easy of settlement to a shipowner than this question of manning the mercantile marine; and yet I do not think there is any shipowner quite capable of exactly deciding what ought to be done. It is a very complex question. It has become involved through late agitation and discussion, and it is not yet ripe for settlement upon a proper basis. National interests have to be considered in relation to war, and I advocated last year before the President of the Board of Trade, that our desire was, if possible, to secure interchangeableness between the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine. I think it can be accomplished. I think it ought to be accomplished. The mercantile sailor is just as courageous and ready for his work—if he only knew what to do—as the seamen of the Royal Navy; but he must be trained for the qualities required in war, and the question at present is this: how is the interest of the shipowner since the abolition of the Navigation Laws, and with the competition to which he is exposed, to be brought into harmony with the national requirements, which should compel from him a ready acquiescence in anything that is for the national good? It is said, for example, Why should not the wages of A.B.'s

in the fore-castle be paid according to their ability? I think it would be nearly impossible to settle that, because you have no rule of judging before a man goes to sea, what his qualities are. The question is, Will a man consent to go on the condition that the captain shall, upon his return, gauge his value? That will be a question of contract, and a difficult one. Again, if you carry out the principle involved in the suggestion of classing men as A.B.'s upon certificates, you virtually establish a trades union, and you play into the hands of those who have advocated this trades union. At the time certificated engineers were put into ships the great difficulty pointed out by steamship owners to the Board of Trade was this: 'We cannot get qualified men with certificates;' but the Board of Trade told us that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers would get us plenty. At that time we had to send the worst of engineers, often drunken fellows, on board because they held certificates; so if you say now: 'We will only take four-year A.B.'s,' you will commence by limiting the already small supply of seamen available for our ships. This means beginning at the wrong end. I think the great thing is to hold out inducements to the sailors to behave themselves, and by the encouragement of the old and friendly relationship between the sailor and the shipowner. That, however, is a matter not to be settled by legislation, though there are certain legislative means by which, perhaps, you can help to arrive at that end. I have had masters of the Royal Navy and captains of frigates applying for command of one of our steamers; but there is a natural feeling among the mercantile marine that they should have nothing to do with naval men, while naval men do not care to associate with the mercantile marine officers. Hence there is a want of sympathy between the one and the other, which I would like to get done away with by making them interchangeable in early youth. What is the inducement to a sailor to go into a merchant ship? Very little, as far as I can see. Three days ago I engaged a first-rate chief officer—as good a man as anybody could find; and having no immediate place for him as first officer, I told him I could make him second officer. He agreed to it, but afterwards he came and told me that, as he lived in Scotland, and had a large family, he could not afford to live here, and I found that, after twelve years at sea, that man has scarcely enough to live on. Hence the question arises in my mind, What can be done to raise the status and the pay of officers, and the status and the pay of men? The question is before the Central Committee of Shipowners for consideration. There are six or seven plans; one finds favour very much in the shape put by Mr. Brassey, which will secure the advantage of proper early education and enlightenment and a proper tone, and which, getting them into the Navy, and the mercantile marine afterwards, will provide some resource in their old age; for very few sailors go to sea after they are fifty, and I want to know where they go. The way to do it, perhaps, will be to arrange some system of pension with a proper early training; and that can only be got if you induce the sailor to see that he can get something on board the ship. I regretted extremely at the time that you reduced the Coastguard Service. I do not know anything more deplorable than a case such as that



of the 'Deutschland,' and other cases where lifeboats, which might have saved many lives, have not been launched, or have not been established, when they would have been of great service under the Coastguard. If we had these Coastguard men ready for war, they would be useful for times of peace: and it was false economy which discharged so many. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre asked, Why do yachtsmen get such good men? Every one knows that yachtsmen are drawn from the fishing vessels when they are idle. Then there are able steady men who work in the yachts in the summer, making short voyages in the spring and autumn in Canadian and other vessels, which are shut up in the winter. Who was the captain of the 'Cambria,' which won the race across the Atlantic? He was the captain of one of the Canadian clippers. I have seen steamers go to sea with a crew of ninety men and not a drunken man, and amongst them there would be perhaps twenty Naval Reserve men; when any earnest shipowner tries to retain them, they do not want it; they won't be engaged for a second trip. I know men now in command of ships who were carpenters seven or eight years ago. There is no falling-off in the raw material, but there is a falling-off somehow or another, and I think it is very much owing to the increase of so many steamers suddenly, and to the competition throughout the whole world. We should deliberately consider what is best for the national interests, and how they can be secured through the mercantile marine; and we owe much to Mr. Brassey for the care and judgment he has shown in the maturing of a plan to secure this development in the best way in the long run.

Captain Sir GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE, R.N.: The gentleman on my right made some observation with reference to the education of boys for the sea by having a vessel established on shore. Well, I have had a very long turn at sea life, and I do not know how it is possible to make boys available for sea service by preparing them on shore. I am quite sure of that; and, therefore, I feel confident that no other system, if we are to introduce boys into the mercantile marine, will answer, than that of establishing vessels at our various ports in England and Ireland. I am very glad to see that the Government have lately wisely adopted an arrangement by which boys who are found competent to join the Royal Navy from such vessels, shall receive a certain sum of money—that is, the training-ships will do so—which will assist in supporting them, because, for a long time past, these institutions have been working with very great difficulty. I speak of the 'Chichester,' the 'Arethusa,' and the vessel at Liverpool. They have been working with very great difficulty by getting contributions from their friends to support these vessels, and they have turned out a very large number of boys, some of whom have been proved, on being sent to Her Majesty's ships, to be quite equal to those boys that have been trained on board the 'Implacable,' and other ships of the Navy. Now if we can train in vessels of the character that I have described boys who are efficient and can be sent into the Navy for 25*l.*, while we are training them on board our own ships at an expense of 40*l.*, 50*l.*, or 60*l.*, I think we ought to encourage the establishment of these vessels in every port in England and Ireland. Some other remarks

have been made to-day, which, perhaps, it is unnecessary for me to touch upon. There are so many naval men here of great experience, that it would be unworthy of me to make any remarks. Still, I would just touch upon the subject of our British seamen. I see three or four officers here (under one or two of whom I had the honour of serving many years ago), one an Admiral, who, when he commissioned a frigate, had the greatest difficulty in getting men. And what were the men we took on board our ship? I am speaking of 1838. Why, two-thirds were useless men, until we took them to sea and instructed them. Therefore, we must not conceive that in days gone by we had all these seamen which we now look forward to, and suppose we are to get them at once, for in 1840 there was very great difficulty in procuring men for the Navy, which induced the Government ultimately to train boys, and have continuous service seamen. I happen myself to have served in the mercantile marine of this country for many years. It is quite true that our mercantile seamen in my early days were the best seamen in the world, and I believe these officers will tell you that the men we received from the mercantile marine were the best seamen we got on board ship, and they did their duty in a most satisfactory manner after being properly encouraged. But a seaman in the Navy now is a very different man to what he was forty years ago. In 1834, the late Admiral Smart, commanding the 'Satellite,' was the first man who introduced the system of exercising seamen as small-arm men, and the first employment of sailors on shore for *soldiers' service* was only in 1847; and the duties which seamen have now to perform in comparison with what they were forty years ago are so various that the seamen that we had in those days from the mercantile marine would have been totally useless now without twelve months' exercise. I therefore think we cannot do better than go on in the old system of training men, not only for the mercantile marine, but for the Navy; and if we can only arrange in any way to work the two together, so that the men shall serve a certain period of time in connection with the Navy as well as in the mercantile marine, then I think we shall attain a good object.

Colonel Lord WAYENY: I have neither professional knowledge nor experience, but I rise to supply a very remarkable omission that I have observed throughout the whole of this debate, and that is with regard to the supply of seamen for the marine service and for the Royal Navy, from coasts on which, I believe, a sea breaks which would try the officers, seamen, and ships of Her Majesty's Service, and therefore, according to all analogy, is likely to produce seamen. I speak of the supply that may be expected from Ireland and her ports. It does not appear to have been present to the recollection of gentlemen that, at this moment, there is a ship, which has been lying for some time in the Lough of Belfast, which has trained a considerable number of young men drawn from the sources on which some discredit—but I think unreasonable discredit—has been cast, those who have been rescued from a life of poverty or a life of crime, and also those who have taken shelter in Union houses. I think I recollect that there was formerly a saying in the Royal Navy, that no Irish seamen were to be found, except between Cork Harbour and the Old Head of

Kinsale. I know not how far that may be true, but I think the establishment of training-ships in the estuary of the Shannon, in the harbour of Cork, in Belfast Lough, and other parts of the Irish seas, will be of great advantage, and I would recommend it to the attention of Mr. Brassey, who has given us such an excellent exposition of these matters, as a subject well worthy of consideration. The maritime enterprise of Ireland is not so extensive, but it reaches as far as the maritime enterprise of other parts of the country, and I hope that on a future occasion we shall hear, not simply of one training-ship in the harbours of Ireland, but three, and perhaps four.

Lord ESSLINGTON, M.P. : I will trespass, for a few moments, on a ground that will commend itself to the hearts of everybody here. If there is one feeling stronger than another in the breast of every Englishman, and I hope every Englishwoman also, it is that of justice, and I wish to be allowed to say one word in justice to foreign seamen, because I have this morning had an opportunity of conversing with a man who probably knows this subject as well as or better than any other man at this moment in England. I shall not mention any names, but some friends here, who know the shipping interest, will recognise whom I mean. He has been engaged in the port of Liverpool—a very good scene for such labours—upon a close inquiry, for four years, into the condition of the merchant service. Therefore when I state him as my authority, it is no mean authority. Now, I am going to state a fact which he told me, which no doubt will startle a good many gentlemen here present. There are, making all deductions, not more than 40,000 able seamen in the merchant service of this country. Out of the 160,000 or 170,000 British seamen employed in ships clearing and entering British ports, there are not more than 40,000 A.B.'s that are *thoroughly able* seamen! And how many of those able seamen does this meeting suppose are foreigners? Not less than 15,000! That is a fact so remarkable that I think it will startle a great many persons who hear it. But let us follow that out a moment, and observe our position. First of all let me say, in justice to the foreigner whose character has been rather lightly spoken of to-day, that I am in a position to state, without fear of contradiction, that some of the best seamen in the merchant service at this moment—I say it as an Englishman, with sorrow, but with truth—are foreigners, and those men are drawn from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. Now, we know that the character of those men is very like our own, and they improve upon our character, because they are more docile, and more obedient, and more loyal to their superiors. That is a remark that I believe is a correct one. But now look at the position we should be placed in, supposing a sudden outbreak of war were to occur, and we have had bitter experience, not in this country, but in Europe, of what an outbreak of war means. It is a sudden and a sharp blow. Supposing a war, on any large scale, were to break out, we should probably lose at once something like 15,000 able seamen, because they are foreigners. Well, then, I come to the point my honourable friend has pressed upon us, and it is an official point which I have often heard in the House of Commons pressed, with some power and much authority, by persons in high official situations. They talk very



much, and rather big, about having 12,000 Naval Reserve. Now, I want to ask any First Lord of the Admiralty, or anyone connected with the Admiralty, how many of those men do they suppose they can get on a sudden outbreak of war? I do not believe they would get more than one-third of those men. They might get 4,000, and think themselves very lucky if they got them. But then, if we are to lose something near to 15,000 able seamen—foreigners—and we are only to command, on a sudden outbreak of war, the services of 4,000 Naval Reserve men, why our position is a very serious one. You have not got, to start with, above 40,000 altogether, and you have got the whole commerce of this country to carry on, and at the same time you have to form the first line of defence against any combination of naval power that you may have to meet. It is an extraordinary thing to me that we are asked to vote vast sums of money year by year, and expensive schemes are presented to us of mobilisation of forces and formation of camps, and fortifications to lock up—God knows—how many thousands of our troops, but the question of our Naval Militia seems to me never to enter into the minds of our legislators. We have gone on, for years, upon Bonaparte's motto, which is the falsest in the world. '*Nous ne faisons rien nous laissons faire.*' To trust the defence of these islands to such a maxim as that seems to me the height of folly. We must take some step for the comprehensive organisation of our Naval Militia. I believe that is the first duty of our statesmen, but I have not the weight or authority to say what the exact form that it should take should be. I augur well, however, from the efforts of such men as my honourable friend, and these public discussions, which, I trust, will awaken the mind of the country to the vital importance of this subject. I will only ask leave to say one more word. We have heard a great deal about the demoralisation of the seamen. I have attended to this subject a good many years; I do not pretend to be an authority, because I have not the means of becoming so, but by constant attention you must learn something, and I do not believe that, in themselves, the seamen are one bit worse, but probably rather better, than they were; but there is a system of engaging and discharging seamen in this country which has been in practice for a long time, and which is most detrimental to discipline. I allude to the engagement of the crews at the shipping office, and I will tell, in two words, what I believe to be at the bottom of a good deal of that feeling, not of disloyalty, but of disrespect and disregard for their officers, which is fatal to discipline, and which is engendered and fostered by that system. The seamen are not often very highly educated men or men of the world, although they travel a good deal, and they have a sort of idea in their minds that they owe a double allegiance, to the shipowner, in the first place, and to the shipping-master, who is a Board of Trade officer, in the next place. That system of engaging crews under the control and superintendence of the Board of Trade official, which the shipping-master really is, tends to produce that feeling, and tends, moreover, to prevent the master having the opportunity of making the acquaintance of his crew before he goes to sea. I believe that that is a most mischievous system for the country, because

unless you can bring them into relationship with one another, it is impossible to expect that those cordial relations which should exist, will exist between them. They may form themselves in the course of a long voyage, but then there is a system pursued which is very destructive to discipline, and that is the recording of the offences and the reading them out from the log to the seamen, however petty the offences may be. That causes in his mind a rankling feeling of antipathy to his officer, knowing that he will be punished or fined when he gets on shore. That is a very bad system. I won't detain you longer, but I think if this question of the shipping office is really looked into, you will find it was a very great mistake to supersede, even for the convenience afforded by the shipping office, the old system of engaging the crews under the responsibility of the master, as he chose, some few days before the ship sailed.

ADJOURNED DISCUSSION.—Thursday, February 24th, 1876.

*Admiral Sir Hastings R. Yelverton, G.C.B., in the Chair.*

MR. CORRY, M.P.: Sir Hastings Yelverton, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—When I moved the adjournment of this debate, I was scarcely aware of the responsibility it devolved upon me, but still, as a practical shipowner and as one who has had considerable experience on the question before us, I may be allowed to make a few remarks. I have listened with very much pleasure indeed to Mr. Brassey's able, moderate, and suggestive paper, and with many of his suggestions I most heartily agree, yet to some I must take exception. Briefly alluding to some of the principal features of his paper, the first point that struck me was this, he rather doubted whether our sailors had deteriorated as a body. I think those who have had practical experience will admit that as a class they have deteriorated. I will not deny that perhaps at the present time there are as many good sailors as there were twenty years ago, but there are certainly twice as many bad ones. Looking at the rapid progress of our trade, it was scarcely possible that the quality could have been kept up to the standard. Now, a great many reasons can be urged why sailors have deteriorated; one reason is that steamers employ a large number of seamen, but do not make sailors. Another reason is, our ships are now fitted in a very different way to what they were years ago; in fact, the whole study of the shipowner is how to dispense with what we call skilled labour, that is, to do as much work on deck as we can, and to render ourselves as much as possible independent of that skilled labour which we cannot always obtain. This answers the purpose to a certain extent, but when any emergency or any accident occurs we find ourselves at a great loss. Mr. Brassey referred to the fact that a fewer number of men were now employed to man a given amount of registered tonnage of shipping than formerly, and that this proved that the quality of the men cannot have deteriorated. This argument, however, falls through, when we consider that ships are now of a

very much larger class than formerly, and require fewer men comparatively to man them. Apart from this, the superiority in fitting of the modern class of ship would fully account for the difference he refers to. While claiming that sailors are pretty much as they were formerly, he thinks, and we all think and hope, that some means may be devised for improving their condition, and a number of the suggestions he threw out are deserving of our best attention. He refers to the want of encouragement which has hitherto existed for any special exertion on the part of the sailor, and the insufficiency of pay. He acknowledges that this last defect has been in a measure remedied, and that the pay is now as much in proportion as in other trades, especially taking into account the facilities of learning the trade, if you may call it one; it is scarcely so now, that is, there are so many who go into it who have not gone through the preparatory training requisite to make good seamen. Mr. Brassey also referred to the advance notes. This is a very difficult question, and one which has had the careful attention of our General Shipowners' Committee, and is a subject on which I should like to say a few words. We all deplore the abuses which he described, but I think the remedy might be in many cases worse than the disease. It was not a shipowner's measure, it was designed purely for the benefit of the sailor. The shipowner would much prefer to give no advance, and would be willing to give higher wages to dispense with advance, but we find we cannot obtain sailors without it. Perhaps the most practical way would be gradually to reduce the amount from a month to half a month's advance, till the seamen are trained to more provident habits, as now they must have something to start with. Besides, if you do not give an advance, you must introduce a very objectionable feature on board your ships, namely, the truck system, which has a great many abuses connected with it. However, I think the last defect to which Mr. Brassey referred was the most important one, that is, the want of systematic training for our sailors. The great bulk of our sailors are not trained, or at least the training is of such a slight character that you can scarcely call it training at all. After being perhaps a year and a half in a coaster, they join our ships as A.B.'s. Our captains, of course, know that these are not competent A.B.'s, but still they are all so much alike that it is difficult to discriminate among them. I will give you an instance in point. I had a ship of 1,800 tons lately arrive at Calcutta; the captain wrote to me with reference to her, and he said, 'With regard to the crew, they are very willing, and are fairly able to make and take in sail, but I can only find four or five men out of the whole crew competent to steer the ship.' (She carries a crew of forty men, all told.) Now this ship is remarkably easily steered, and has all the best appliances for steering. This will show you that the quality is certainly not what we would like to see. One of the remedies Mr. Brassey proposes is the classification of seamen. This, at first sight, looks very well indeed; but I think, as was pointed out at the last meeting, it opens up a very dangerous question, that is, the question of trades' unions, and all who have had experience of trades' unions would be very sorry to see anything of the



kind introduced at sea. We have enough of discomforts and annoyances without having this system introduced in our ships. We can very well understand, if the ships were ready for sea, the trades' unions might have it in their power to stop the ship and make their own terms, and therefore, while it looks well, the dangers are so great that shipowners as a body would fight shy of it. With regard to discharge, the discharge note should be a certificate of classification, and our captains are to blame that it is not more so. Of course any one will take seamen who have good discharges for a number of years, and some captains will only take men who have good discharges, and I think this is the right track to go on. If a man cannot produce a discharge it is a sure sign that there is something wrong about him. I have a case in point. I had a ship which lately went down to Gravesend with one of the crew deficient, and I was surprised to find the captain refusing to ship a powerful looking man who presented himself, simply because he had no discharge. The consequence was he had to take two, because the men who had discharges were not up to the mark in *physique*.

A suggestion was thrown out by Mr. Brassey that we should retain picked seamen while in port. I think that is scarcely practicable, at least in sailing ships after long voyages. I know that while in port they won't stay with us, and if they join a week or two before the time, as we sometimes allow them to do, they are comparatively useless, as the dock men, who are trades' unionists, will not work with them. Another point he brought out was the personal intercourse of the owners with the seamen. Now, I cannot see very well how that can be accomplished. We, of course, as he well knows, do not take cruises with our ships, and the only intercourse we may have is in occasionally going down to Gravesend, when I do not think, as a rule, the men are in a fit state for social intercourse. We now come to the important question of training-ships. This is a question occupying a great deal of public attention and a great deal of shipowners' attention. It is regarded by many as a panacea for all the evils connected with our seamen, and many philanthropists look upon it as combining two very desirable objects, viz., getting rid of a dangerous class of our rising population and making them worthy members of society. I do not altogether agree that it is a panacea for all the evils, but I believe it has many good features, and therefore should be encouraged. Unfortunately the great bulk of those who are at present in our training-ships are not the class of boys we would select as our apprentices to make seamen of. I would much prefer a few lads brought up on the coast or in the country to any number of these waifs of society; in fact, you can scarcely expect that they will turn out anything but indifferently. Their early training and influences have been certainly not of the best character. If a better class of boys can be induced to join, the result would no doubt be different. I think, moreover, it is a very artificial system. Comparatively little training can be done on shore. If you wish to train a boy you must send him to sea, and I would suggest that proper cruisers should be fitted out merely for the purpose of instructing these boys. First they would

require a certain amount of training on shore and then be transferred to these special cruisers, for the purpose of teaching them something of their duties at sea. I do not think Mr. Brassey's plan for subsidising owners carrying apprentices would work; I do not think we would like to be so subsidised. We do not require this artificial help. We do carry apprentices, all the large shipowners do carry apprentices, and many not only carry them without premiums but give premiums instead of receiving them. I may say, in answer to some remarks made by gentlemen who spoke at the last meeting about foreigners, and especially foreign officers, having the preference, that four or five of our present captains served their time in our employ, and all the others have been officers with us, so that we do not forsake those who have served us. We take apprentices really with the object of making our officers; it is not with the idea of making sailors, they are of too high a class for that. You cannot well combine the two classes, you cannot take apprentices and ordinaries or training-ship boys together, because, as in our own practice, if we take apprentices, we must have all the rest A.B.'s, as we find when we do ship all A.B.'s that there are a great many very ordinary ones among them. With regard to the Pension Fund for raising the status of seamen, I think that is a very desirable object, but you will not get Jack to subscribe to it. If it is done at all, I have no hesitation in saying it will be done at the expense of the shipowner, that is, whatever is put into the Pension Fund will be practically a tax on the shipowners over and above the wages. The men will not be mulcted of their wages for any such object. The foreign element has been alluded to several times in this debate, and we cannot very well dispense with it. A great many of these foreigners are the best seamen we can get; all, in fact, from the northern coasts (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark) are the best and the most trustworthy men. In fact, we make sure that if such men sign articles, they will come on board sober and fit for their duties, and therefore we give them the preference. We do not care for any southerners, as we find that they are not so trustworthy nor such competent seamen. The northern men, as a rule, are steady, sober, and very attentive to their duties, and are trained seamen; brought up from boyhood along their coast, they are really our very best men, and we would certainly miss them. Lord Eslington made a very telling remark when he referred to what would occur if all these 12,000 foreigners had to be dispersed in the event of a war. Now I think the practical effect would be, that that would not occur. The sailors of any nation with which we were at war would perhaps leave our employ, but the bulk would stay where they were. Mr. Brassey referred, with much feeling, to the dangers and temptations that beset the sailor. We all acknowledge that, and have to make great allowances, and no one can think of these dangers and temptations to which the sailor is subject, without having his sympathies roused in his behalf and allowing very large latitude for his misdemeanours.

Captain J. C. WILSON, R.N.: Unfortunately I was not here at the beginning of this lecture, and I have only been able to take a cursory

glance of the discussion which took place at the former meeting. I should like to begin by asking the honourable lecturer a question which will clear away a great deal of difficulty. Can he tell us how many of the 202,000 merchant seamen are really *bond-fide* blue-jackets? because, if we can get at those figures, we shall be in a position to argue the point clearly and with some benefit. Before I came here, I looked at an old Nautical Dictionary of 1815, and found the definition of the word 'seaman' there given to imply a man who had been brought up to the sea, in contradistinction to a 'landsman,' a man who had not been brought up to service at sea. I fancy a great number of people included in the appellation 'seamen' really are not even 'landsmen,' but 'shore men.'

Mr. BRASSEY: I think I know a gentleman in this room who can tell me. Mr. Williamson, can you tell me what was your calculation of the number of firemen and stewards?

Mr. WILLIAMSON: I had a communication from the Registrar-General of Seamen on the point, and he gave the following figures:—About 202,000 men, so called, in the British mercantile marine; the total number, 202,000, embraces stokers, firemen, stewards, cooks in steamers, as well as stewards and cooks in steerage. I deduct 10 per cent. from the number of men in sailing ships, 130,000, that gives 87,000 hands in sailing ships, including ordinaries, A.B.'s, and foreigners. In steamers there are 71,000 hands; take 50 per cent. off, that gives you 35,000 seamen, making altogether 150,000 in round numbers as the seamen hands.

Captain WILSON: Now we have arrived at something definite; instead of having 202,000 seamen, we have only 150,000 blue jackets, as they are called in Parliamentary phraseology, and out of those 150,000 men we may, I think, taking our naval experience because we can have nothing better, estimate that about 50,000 of those are landsmen,<sup>1</sup> about 50,000 are ordinaries, and possibly 50,000 are able seamen. Now, from a conversation I had with Mr. Shaw-Lefevre the other day, I was somewhat shaken in an opinion which I think the honourable lecturer will remember I conveyed some years ago indirectly to him, that we had then not more than 25,000 *able seamen*, which I still maintain is the right class to estimate the seaman power of your Fleet by, whether merchant or naval. The test is the number of able-bodied men you have, because you can make a cab-driver or any one else into a blue-jacket to-morrow; and the term 'blue-jackets' is simply an evasion of the question. We know that First Lords when in difficulties about men enter a number of novices, or any trash they can get, and go and tell Parliament they have so many sailors; 'blue-jackets' they may be, but they are not seamen. In the merchant service we have, say 50,000 able seamen, and I see Lord Eslington the other day said that out of those at least 15,000 were foreigners, and were prime seamen; I think it most natural it should be so, because if they were not prime seamen they would not as it were turn out our own men.

'Landsman' is a rating given to 'ordinary.' In the Navy the rating has men who are not qualified for that of been changed to ordinary second-class.



Therefore I think it is pretty clear that in the whole of the British mercantile marine, the first mercantile marine of the world, monopolising the bulk of the trade of the world, the whole number of able-bodied skilled sailors is only about 35,000; that is putting it at the very utmost we can possibly estimate. Supposing 50,000 able-bodied men are enough to carry on the trade of this country, we know from the Royal Navy that to keep up the number of 50,000 able seamen, we should require 15,000 boys a year, and to keep up 10,000 or 11,000 able seamen in the Royal Navy it at present requires 3,000 boys a year; therefore, if we require 50,000 men for the merchant service we may fairly conclude that as the loss in the Navy is not greater than in the merchant service, we should therefore want 15,000 boys annually to make good the waste on the 50,000 able seamen. Had the apprenticeship system continued in force, and the apprentices been carried, as they were in former times, according to tonnage, we should have had, at present, about 59,000 apprentices,—an extraordinarily large number,—or if calculated according to the old rule of one apprentice to every four men in a crew, we should require about 50,000 apprentices. This would be in excess, I think, of the numbers we require.<sup>1</sup> Then we may go on to the question,—if we are to train boys, who is to provide and pay for them? That part of the question I know nothing about; the shipowners must settle it, but I think a certain proportion of boys are due by Government, and I will tell you why. Government draws from the mercantile marine a reserve. That reserve is estimated at from 14,000 to 15,000 men. The bulk of those men are able seamen, and, as I have shown you before, it takes 3,000 boys to keep up 10,000 or 11,000 able seamen in the Navy, therefore, I think Government should by right, and might be expected by shipowners, to train at least from 3,000 to 3,500 boys a year, or give their equivalent in money. I have no opinion of your third-class reserves, no opinion of your restrictions, and as it were, ticketing the boys. One of the few cases where I differ with Mr. Brassey is in his idea of training. In passing, I ask any practical man, shipowners let them ask their captains,—captains, let them give their opinions,—I am sure that ninety-nine out of one hundred seamen will agree that you cannot train sailor-boys anywhere except afloat. I have gone into the question and thought it over carefully; and know the advantages you derive on shore, and the time you gain in different ways, but as Mr. Brassey very properly put it, training is artificial, so the nearer you can approach the real thing the better, and the nearest approach to reality is having training-ships afloat. What you teach the boy of knotting, splicing, reefing, and steering, are matters of small importance compared to the *aptitude* gained for sea life. He can take care and provide for himself; he knows which way to turn when he goes on board a ship; and above everything, he has acquired the language of the sea, and is in every

<sup>1</sup> The number is not so much in excess as at first appears, for supposing the boys were apprenticed for four years, there would be upwards of 50,000 serving to make good the waste on 50,000 able seamen.

way better fitted for the rough and tumble of sea life; the question whether he knows how to haul out an earing or not is of secondary importance. I do not think the Commission was practical in its suggestions about having training ships as Mr. Brassey proposes. One hundred boys are not enough to have any complete organisation, and organisation is the root and branch of good discipline. As to the plan of 100 boys going off to the ships daily to school, you might just as well leave them on shore altogether. The fewer boys you have on board a ship the greater is the expense. A two-decker, with 500 boys, is a very good style of training-ship, perhaps the best we have in the Royal Navy. A three-decker (with 700 boys) is more economical per head. I think Mr. Brassey says that the apprentice system still supplies us, out of these 15,000 boys which are required to keep up a proper number of men in the merchant service, with 3,500.

That question I was going to raise, but I think the number you estimate from the training-ships is in excess. I should say you do not get 1,000; in fact, when I was in the city the other day, and I had the honour of speaking before the Lord Mayor, I did not please some gentlemen present because I told them what was a fact, that private training-ships are not training-ships proper. These vessels were valuable for the purpose,—there were very few of them,—they were lent for a definite and distinct purpose, but instead of that they are turned into charitable institutions, which do a great deal of good no doubt, but such boys as they do train are trained at a very expensive rate, and collectively they only turn out one-fifth the number they ought; for with all due deference to my friend, Mr. Stirling Lacon, the boys in the royal training-ships do not cost 60% a year, and the boys are not trained for the merchant service for 19% each. The boys sent to sea from most private training-ships cost on an average, 65% per head,<sup>1</sup> and the boys trained in the Royal Navy, including pay, a free kit, and the dozen and one things we give them, cost somewhat under 40% per year. I made a little calculation the other day, and I am perfectly certain of this,—if you can put the boys into properly organised training-ships, with sufficient supervision and properly conducted, making due allowance for all expenses, you could train them for from 28% to 30% a year a head, and one year is ample.

Third-class  
Reserve.

I touched upon the question of a third-class reserve. It is a very serious thing for one to differ with his superiors, and perhaps it is a great piece of impertinence on my part to do so, but I cannot understand their making it a *sine quâ non* that a boy should have *two* years' training when *one* is ample, and offering 25% for what they know must cost at least 50%. The third-class reserve is a mistake. You know that to keep up the

<sup>1</sup> The Marine Society is an exception to the rule; boys from them are usually fine well-trained respectable lads. They are never kept more than a year under training, or entered under 15 years of age. They cost about 25% each to train.

I am also informed that the 'Chichester's' and 'Arethusa's' boys are not kept more than one year under training, but I have seen less of them than the others.

number of men in your reserve you owe the merchant service so many thousands of boys; put them therefore into the merchant service, and draw out your full-grown sailor as you require or can get him. I can see no better plan than the one I advocated in this theatre myself for improving the royal seamen and the reserve, whilst at the same time linking the merchant service with the Royal Navy, which I think is a most important matter for the country. I cannot understand how we are to expect, in time of war, that you are going to utilise your naval reserve men, brought up as at present with totally different ideas,—men who know nothing whatever of your ships or discipline, who, as was once said by a gallant Admiral, never have seen anything of men-of-war but their outside; how are you going to get these men to work harmoniously with your continuous service men, a totally different class? They are perfectly distinct classes; the merchant seamen will be placed under men-of-war's men who have different sympathies and ideas, and if they work well together for the benefit of the service, it will be a perfect miracle. The first way to break down such a dangerous feeling is to carry out the system I proposed before; that there should be an interchangeableness between the two services.

Plan for  
sending  
boys  
trained  
for Navy  
into mer-  
chant  
ships.

I do not believe in this tremendous deterioration of merchant seamen, or the impossibility of getting the small number of men we should require; I believe there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, though the number may be less. I believe we have a certain percentage of thoroughly able men in the merchant service, and no person who knows anything about seamen will expect that every man who goes to sea will turn out a good sailor; to be so, he must have the natural instincts and qualities of a sailor, to make him a good one; and these are only developed and brought forward by the work he has to do; and to expect that you are going to make an ideal seaman, one of those first-rate fellows we remember, and who is treasured in our minds as our standard sailor, out of every *lud* who joins your ship, is to expect too much; it can never be so. What we want is a certain number of leading men; certain men to act as the arrow's point when it comes to emergency, to lead the others, who will, when thus headed, do the work; a few such men are necessary and invaluable everywhere. I would bring into the Navy a certain number of young sailors from the merchant service, passing them in through barracks. I would reduce the continuous service men and make up the remainder of our 20,000 seamen with the non-continuous service men. These men should pass from the Navy into the Reserve and returning from time to time as it suited them to come, and us to receive them. In the Reserve their time should count in certain proportions which I gave before, that is in the proportion of three years in the Reserve to two in the Navy, and whenever they had made up in and out of the Navy their twenty-one years' service, they should be entitled to a short service pension.

Seamen  
have not  
deterio-  
rated.

As to the question of the pay of seamen, I do not know what it may be in the merchant service; but looking into an old book of 1815, I find the pay of petty officers in the Royal Navy was then 46s. a month, while at

Pay of  
seamen.



present it is 58s.; A.B.'s 36s. 3d., it is now 40s. 7d. Considering that is sixty years ago I do not think the increase of the pay has kept pace with the times; and if the same style of thing obtains in the merchant service, I can only say it is no wonder you do not get good men. We are certainly told that seamen and officers in the merchant service are not properly paid. The reason of this is *insurance*. If you had no insurance, both seamen and officers would be better remunerated; as a proof of that it is a well-known fact that in all the large companies where the vessels are not insured, the officers and men are of a superior stamp, and are invariably better paid. That is the root of the whole question.<sup>1</sup>

Supply of  
officers.

Now we come to the last point—the interchange of officers. I ventured, and I think I was one of the first to venture upon it, to say it would be a good thing for the Navy if we took naval reserve officers for a certain period into the royal service. I want to see a sympathy and interchange between the two services. We have not to look very far to see the advantage of so doing. We know the old fable of the bundle of sticks, if we are united and hang together, we can carry everything before us; but why are we so powerless for good in the Royal Navy, and why are the seamen in the merchant service so helpless? I am putting the shipowners on one side, and am speaking of the men 'who go down to the sea in ships.' Simply and entirely because there is no unity between us. Let us be united by every means in our power. Why in this great maritime country do we find that twenty-six millions are spent annually upon the Army in England and India, and only a bare ten millions on the Navy, and still the Navy is called the first line of defence? In the first place the Army is a powerful, rich corporation, and is backed up by a large Militia, and a still larger body of Volunteers. These all sympathise together, they are all one profession, and they take care that the second line of defence will never be short of funds or allowed to fall much astern. I approve of Mr. Brassey's proposal that there should be scholarships at Greenwich. I would, indeed, throw Greenwich College open to all naval reserve officers, let those pass through it who like; and give a certain number of scholarships for those who are too poor to pay expenses. I should like also to see the young naval reserve officers pass through the Navy and spend nine months or a year in our service as sub-lieutenants. By that means, as I said the other day, we should be able safely to reduce our lists of officers, and keep them more *au fait* at their work by employing them more constantly. If I commissioned a ship and there was war to-morrow, I would be quite willing to take a large number of naval reserve officers and men and take my chance with them provided they had been previously passed through the Navy. I think our naval reserve is not as efficient as it should be, nor as numerous. You cannot expect a naval reserve man to be qualified or disciplined in the time now allowed. If the men and officers

<sup>1</sup> Suppose railway trains were insured like ships and cargoes, would not the result be that the directors would have less interest in their safety, that

guards, signalmen, and other servants would be underpaid and inferior men? but this is an analogous case.—J. C. W.

were passed through the Navy you would have a reserve on which you could depend. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre said a man in a month's time properly brought up would be very effective; but where are you going to get the month in time of war? In the olden times you had twelve months to rig your ships and train your crew, but now-a-days you will be sent to sea and fight your battles in a week, and there will be no time to make your men: and when on this subject we must not forget that other countries have much larger reserves of trained seamen than we have.

I will conclude by saying I think we have every reason to be grateful to Mr. Brassey, that with the great knowledge he has of maritime matters he should from an independent stand-point, away both from the Navy or the merchant service, give so carefully and so accurately a digest of facts such as he has brought before us in his excellent paper, and which has led to such a very interesting and important discussion.

Mr. JOHN WILLIAMSON: Sir Hastings Yelverton,—As I hold the position of Hon. Secretary to the Liverpool Committee for Inquiring into the Condition of Seamen, I may be able to lay before you some figures that may be of use in this discussion. I must say how very gratifying it is to myself and to my Committee that so many naval men are found taking an interest in this subject, because I believe the solution of this training question lies in a connection between the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine. I am also very glad to see gentlemen in the position of Mr. Brassey, who spares neither time nor labour in trying to do something for his country's good, endeavouring to solve this question. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre at your last week's debate should not, I think, have made so strong a statement as is reported, that he looked upon the cry as to the deterioration of our seamen as an exaggeration. If Mr. Lefevre would show us facts and figures for his statement, I would join issue with him. In 1869, the Committee of Inquiry took its origin from similar views expressed by Mr. Lefevre, and a series of questions was issued to men who are capable of giving information, viz., shipmasters of the best character in Liverpool, London, and elsewhere; shipowners, once shipmasters, who are capable of expressing a very good opinion, and others. The result was, 80 per cent. of the replies we received stated that seamen had deteriorated, and only 2 per cent. that they were improved, and 3 per cent. that they were as good as before. I think these figures speak for themselves. I may also just add that the only Government document that has ever been brought forward, stating any contrary opinion, was a report by Mr. Gray and Mr. Hamilton, from the Board of Trade, in 1873, which was presented to Parliament, in which they did not say seamen were as good as before, but that the report of their deterioration was not quite borne out. Now no town in the country can express a better opinion on this point than Liverpool, where at a crowded meeting to meet Mr. Gray before he issued his report, there was not a single hand held up against the statement that the sailor had deteriorated. Mr. Gray, at a public meeting in Liverpool, in the following September, makes remarks of this sort:—

Mr. Williamson.  
Deterioration  
of seamen.

‘Unseaworthy sailors would lose the best of ships.’ . . .

'It was now time they took into consideration the question of unseaworthy sailors.' . . .

'He believed, and those gentlemen who were his colleagues believed, that if it was really wanted to prevent loss of life at sea, they would have to begin with the sailors.' . . .

'There was also an immense waste in the mercantile marine from the unseaworthiness of seamen, and it was found that men were shipped as seamen who from their physical condition were utterly unfit to go to sea.' . . .

And again, at a meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne on September 21 of the same year, Mr. Gray says :—'The question of loss of life at sea was not a question of unseaworthiness of ships so much as of unseaworthiness of seamen.'

I consider that report and these statements by Mr. Gray most contradictory. The evidence of the fact of this deterioration is undoubted. I cannot go back fifty years and say the seamen then were better than they are now. I have to deal simply with the fact that they are now very bad, and also that there are not 25 per cent. of fore-castle hands that know the ordinary duties of seamen. I take it that there are 150,000 hands, all told, in the mercantile marine, 16,000 of whom are apprentices. I may mention that these apprentices are generally not, in the fore-castle, they are in the round-house, or in the poop, training to be officers and masters, so that I am dealing simply with grown-up hands. Now, if only 25 per cent. of these fore-castle hands are seamen in the proper sense, we have barely 40,000 A.B.'s in the mercantile marine of this country. We have 19,000 foreigners, according to the Board of Trade returns. All A.B.'s are paid alike; they are all shipped at the same time at the shipping office, and at the same wages.

Captain WILSON: Are these foreigners plus the 40,000?

Mr. WILLIAMSON: No; of the 40,000 A.B.'s, about 15,000 are foreigners; that gives you 25,000 good English A.B.'s in the mercantile marine of this country. Out of these about 11,000 belong to the first-class Royal Naval Reserves; that is what the Navy has to fall back upon in an emergency. Now I would ask naval gentlemen, how many of those will they get in the first five or six months of a war? It would not be 3,000 or 4,000 at the outside. I quite agree with Mr. Brassey, that a compulsory benefit fund for seamen should be established. Mr. Brassey spoke to a large number of respectable sailors in Liverpool last December, and without one dissentient they agreed to this. Then, as to the second remedy, viz., that before being allowed to rate as A.B., satisfactory proof of having been four years at sea should be produced. You find many A.B.'s tell you that they wish to leave the sea because they get no protection at all. They do not like to be in the fore-castle with so many incompetent men; they say the duties of the ship are thrown upon a few, while the others do not do the work, and yet all get the same pay.

As to the advance notes, my friend Mr. Corry and I must differ on this point. We had a very large meeting of shipowners in Liverpool the other

Remedial  
measures.

Advance  
notes.



day belonging to the Association of Sailing Shipowners of the port, and they almost unanimously agreed to the abolition of the advance note; the few who objected did not object on the principle of the thing, but because they felt it would produce a great deal of inconvenience to the shipowners in engaging crews. We made this suggestion, that the law should not come into operation until twelve months after the passing of the Act, which would give time to inform the seamen that they must take care to have a few pounds in their pocket, instead of coming on board ship destitute as they do now; the abolition of the advance note I believe would, to a great extent, take the men out of the hands of crimps and harpies; and I may add the better class of sailors wish these advance notes abolished.

Now I come to the question of the supply of good trained men. We have to deal with a recognised waste of 16,000 a year, which is about 10 per cent. upon the sailor hands all told—I think it is more, I believe it is fully that. Some people estimate it at 20,000; however, take it at 16,000. From the apprenticeship system the annual supply is about 3,500, and the training-ships round our coasts supply something like 700 or 800, it is near a thousand altogether—but some of these ships supply apprentices, such as the ‘Conway’ in Liverpool, the ‘Worcester,’ and one or two of the better class training-ships, and these are included in the supply under the head of apprentices. Taking it, however, at 1,000 a year, that gives us 4,500 a year to meet this waste of 16,000 men. A great deal has been said about training ships, and the Royal Commission were strong on this point likewise. Our Committee have taken it up and dealt with it on the recommendation of the Royal Commission, but we find it very hard indeed to get steamship owners to agree to a rating for the supply of trained hands. They do not feel the pinch as the sailing shipowners do; they get the pick of the men, while the sailing shipowners are those who alone are training seamen. I may also mention, you could not introduce a law to compel shipowners to carry apprentices, because steamers cannot take apprentices; they do not require them, and they cannot train them. You would have to fall back upon sailing shipowners and only those engaged in the foreign trade. Any shipowner knows perfectly well if there was a compulsory law to carry apprentices, no ship could be compelled to carry more than four apprentices to every 1,000 tons. On that basis we have actually more apprentices by about 2,000 than we would be compelled to carry in our foreign-going ships to-day; therefore we must throw on one side altogether any attempt to make apprenticeship compulsory; few shipowners carry more than that proportion. I know some carry eight or ten, some four or six, and some none at all, so that the one equalises the other. There are a number of sailing ships that cannot carry apprentices, ships engaged only in short trades or summer trades, and that lay up in the winter months; therefore you could not force them to carry apprentices. At the same time I do believe, if you could induce shipowners to perpetuate the apprenticeship system and also to increase it a little, it would be a great boon, and I would suggest that might be done by a rebate to

Training-ships.

shipowners carrying apprentices out of the light dues. This is a very large fund, and out of it we transfer about 50,000*l.* a year to the Consolidated Fund. I throw that out as a suggestion. This is the best system of training, and we ought not to neglect but to encourage it. Then as to the training-ship question; after giving every consideration to this subject, the conclusion is forced upon us, that you cannot ask the country to train seamen for the mercantile marine, any more than you can ask it to train bricklayers or any other tradesmen—but we say this, as the Royal Navy must have Royal Naval Reserves, and they must have them from the mercantile marine, it is the militia to the Navy, it is the duty of the Navy to see these are of the best possible quality, and to be so they should undergo preliminary training, and we consider, as shipowners are the first to lose these men in the event of war, the duty of the Government is to train up to the requirements of the Navy for reserves, and to pay the cost of such training. Presuming you must have 20,000 as a first-class reserve, it would take ten training-ships with 300 in each to train up to in thirteen or fourteen years 20,000 first-class reserves. Our scheme is this, that the training should only be in connection with the Royal Naval Reserve, and that the cost of the training should be borne by the Navy estimates—100,000*l.* a year at the very outside; and such lads should be taken into those ships at about fifteen or sixteen years of age, lads educated and of good *physique*, of the mechanic class, to be kept there one year and then drafted into sailing ships as ordinary seamen, and then, after three years, they would figure as A.B.'s in the mercantile marine, and would become first-class reserve men in the Royal Navy.

The Com-  
piler.  
Wages of  
seamen.

Mr. BRASSEY: I regret that my duties in another place require me to leave this room, and, therefore, make it necessary that I should, without delay make a brief reply to some of the observations which have been addressed to this meeting. We have heard deplorable statements with reference to the deficiency and the inefficiency of seamen, and we are all met together here to make suggestions with a view to remedy these very serious evils. I have said in my paper that which I must now repeat, that in the first place it is a question of wages, including in that term not merely the money paid to the man, but the conditions of life which are offered to him, the accommodation on board ship, fair and just treatment by his officers, and a fair and reasonable amount of labour to perform. Those are various elements which may be grouped together under the head of wages, and I say, unless the shipowner offers to those whom he employs terms and conditions which will compare favourably with the terms and conditions offered by other employers to the same class of men, he cannot expect to obtain their services. Indeed, unless the terms and conditions offered are adequate, it is perfectly idle to undertake any artificial or other system of training, with a view to produce the men that are required. Having trained men for the sea, and made them handy men for almost any purpose on shore, the shipowner must necessarily lose the services of the men thus placed in his hand. We have heard to-day of 400 trained seamen being employed in the collieries of the North, and we know that there

is an annual loss of seamen from the fact that men seek shore employment in preference to the sea. Then you have another competitor in this matter, I mean shipowners of the United States. I do not know how the wages compare at this moment, but I believe, until a very recent date, it was the case that the wages in American ships were somewhat higher than those in English ships, and as a consequence, the American merchant navy was largely manned by men who had left the British service to sail under the American flag. Therefore I say, unless the wages are adequate, it is idle to expect our merchant vessels shall be properly manned. The question of wages I need not refer to at greater length, it being especially a question with which the shipowner has to deal.

The other point to which I should like to refer is the question of training. The question is whether the Government can assist the shipowner in this important work. We are all agreed that the Government cannot interfere simply to enable the shipowner to obtain labour on cheap terms. The action of the Navy must be limited, with a strict reference to our naval requirements, and having regard to the essential importance of creating a sufficient reserve of well-trained seamen to man the Navy in case of the emergency of a great naval war, the question is whether it might not be a national duty, which devolves upon our statesmen to consider, how best the Government may combine with the private shipowners in order to provide this naval reserve. At the present time I believe the Naval Reserve is up to the strength laid down by the Admiralty regulations, but the strength required under the present Admiralty regulations is considerably less than the strength recommended by the Manning Commission of 1859; and it is a debatable point whether the Admiralty have been well advised in reducing the strength of the Naval Reserve to the standard at present adopted. I think that if the Government is to assist in training seamen with the view to providing an adequate Naval Reserve, of all plans which I have ever seen, the best and the most practicable appears to be the plan recommended by the last Manning Commission. As I sketched out the details of that plan in my paper, I do not think I shall be occupying your time satisfactorily if I go over the ground again. It does certainly suggest itself to me, that it would be a great advantage to the shipowners and to the mercantile marine generally, if there was established in every port a thoroughly efficient training-vessel, conducted by naval officers, upon the principles which have been followed with so much success in the ships already established at Portsmouth and Plymouth. Captain Wilson, who speaks with very great authority and experience on the subject, says the kind of training-vessels proposed by the Manning Commission are not so satisfactory as larger ships, that it is an extravagant thing to train only 100 boys in a ship, that you have a larger staff in proportion, and other expenses are increased in proportion to the number trained. I suppose that the Manning Commission intended, by limiting the number to 100, to afford the means of training a number of other boys side by side with the boys whose expenses were defrayed by the Admiralty, and thus they suggested the

Training-ships.



plan of day boarders. I think they also suggested that if you provided a ship which was capable of taking 300 boys for training, and you only filled up 100 of those places by boys paid for by the State, it would afford an opportunity to the shipowner, or to benevolent persons and people interested in boys, to send them to these ships to be trained on the Admiralty system, and to be paid for from private resources.

Officers.

Something was said about officers, and I certainly myself should welcome any practicable proposal for giving to the officers to whom you give commissions in your Naval Reserve, the immense advantages of some experience in the Navy. No doubt there might occasionally be difficulties, but when we take into view the class of youths who are now going to sea in the merchant service, and who are being brought up in the 'Conway' and the 'Worcester,' I cannot see that there should be any practicable difficulty in selecting for the distinction of a commission in the Naval Reserve only such officers in the naval service as you would be very glad to associate with naval officers in the royal service. Mr. Lindsay years ago pointed out in his very able separate report on the manning of the Navy, that there were in the merchant service ample materials for such selection, and what Mr. Lindsay said in 1859 I believe is far more true at the present time. If the Navy would associate itself more intimately than hitherto with the cream and flower of the merchant service, they would do a great deal both to strengthen the Navy by providing reserves of officers as well as reserves of men, to whom we should look with confidence in time of war, and also by adding materially to the professional status and efficiency of the officers of the merchant service. You want to make the command of one of our noble merchantmen a recognised and an honourable professional career. At the present time, in our over-peopled country, it is difficult for hundreds and thousands of young men, well educated and well born, to find an opening. I venture to say the command of a fine merchant ship is a career at least as honourable and as attractive as a good many of the very miscellaneous employments to which young men are now looking; and I do not know that there would be any means so likely to make a career of the kind that I am describing, attractive, and to give it a professional tone and a professional recognition, as the association of these officers, at an early stage of their career, with the Royal Navy. I have spoken of this recognition and association of the merchant officers with the Navy in a naval reserve point of view. I believe that if you could by this means elevate the status of the officers of the merchant service, and give them that independence which I should like to see them possess, you would most materially contribute to promote the greater security of life at sea. I say if you could, by the means I have proposed, and by other means, put the officers of your merchant service in a position of the same professional independence, with regard to professional matters, which a barrister enjoys when he is consulted by a client upon a question of law, you would have provided one of the most effectual guarantees you could possibly provide for preventing the sending forth to sea of ships which were unseaworthy from any cause whatever.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## RECENT LEGISLATION AFFECTING BRITISH SEAMEN.

WITHIN the last few years changes of considerable importance have taken place in the laws affecting the relations between the merchant seaman and his employer. Of the numerous Merchant Shipping Acts which have been passed since 1854 there is probably not one of so much consequence to seamen generally as the Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act of 1880; indeed, the effect of this measure has been to bring about a complete revolution in the conditions which previously surrounded the position of the sailor, both at the commencement and at the termination of his engagement.

Under the provisions of the Act of 1880 the advance note was abolished from August 1, 1881; the seaman may demand an allotment of any portion, not exceeding one half of his wages; he is entitled to claim a portion of the wages due to him when he lawfully leaves the ship at the end of his engagement; and he is no longer subject to arrest and imprisonment if he neglects to join his ship after signing the articles, or if he absents himself from duty without leave. These, in short, are the leading provisions of the new Act, and it is hardly necessary to say that they go far towards removing the chief disadvantage under which the seaman has hitherto been placed.

The advance note system has long been recognised as an evil by most persons who are acquainted with its working. Its retention was advocated mostly by those shipowners who saw in it a means of keeping down the rate of wages, and by those who feared that without the aid of the note it would be difficult to secure the attendance of crews at the times fixed for sailing. It was also supported by the crimps and harpies whom it provided with a living. To outsiders it may appear strange that a system which is so generally admitted to be detrimental to the sailor's welfare should have been permitted to exist so long. But the explanation of the apparent anomaly is simple. In the first place, a considerable proportion of shipowners regarded the

Merchant  
Seamen  
Act, 1880.

Advance  
note  
abolished.

question from a narrow, and possibly somewhat selfish, stand-point. Without inquiring very closely into the ultimate effects of the system, they found in it a simple and inexpensive means of compelling the hands to join at the proper time. And, in the second place, as Commander Dawson pointed out in an article in the *Nautical Magazine* for November 1878, in the passing of Acts relating to merchant seamen, 'those members who represent seaport towns, and those who are employers of sea-labour, have great influence. But the members for mercantile seaports owe their position partly to the votes of crimps, clothiers, and publicans, the creditors and natural foes of sailors, and to those of employers. As those who pass their lives on board ship do not possess votes for Parliament, no political purpose can be served by befriending them. It is, then, no wonder that these Acts of Parliament lean sometimes to the sailors' creditors, the crimp, the publican, and the employer, rather than to the men who, in every variety of climate and of weather, carry their lives in their hands from day to day, and from night to night, in the struggle for daily bread for themselves and for their families.'

Allotment  
of wages.

The new Act also made a change with regard to the allotment of wages. Formerly the granting of an allotment note was optional on the part of the owner. Now the seaman can demand it as his right, and he may have the note made payable either to the relations specified in Sec. 169 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1854, or to a savings bank on his own account. The object of this clause is of course the encouragement of habits of prudence. It may safely be said that the greater the amount of wages which the seaman has to receive at the termination of his voyage the greater is the risk of his falling into the hands of those who live by means of his indiscretion and follies. Therefore if he can be induced to allot a portion of his earnings either to his relations or to his own credit in a savings bank his chances of escape are considerably increased. This extension of the allotment system to savings banks is a decided improvement on the old arrangement, as it must often happen that a man has no relations to whom he desires to allot his earnings; and in such a case the law now enables him to exercise his prudence to his own advantage. A distinction is made, however, between the note drawn in favour of a relation and the one made payable to a savings bank, as the payments on the latter will not become due until three months after the signing of the ship's agreement, instead of one month, as in the case of notes payable to relations.

It is maintained that, since the abolition of the advance note and the introduction of the present allotment system, the old abuse



has merely taken a new form, and that allotments are now made in favour of crimps and boarding-house keepers. To what extent this is the case is at present uncertain; but it seems unlikely that such a practice can become general. By the abolition of the punishment of imprisonment for men who refuse to join, the crimp who discounts an allotment note is placed in a precarious position, as regards the recovery of any money he may have advanced. Of course one effect of this must be the imposition of most extravagant terms of discount; but, although this may be an increased disadvantage to the man who seeks an advance, it must act as a powerful deterrent to the practice of making advances in any form.

An improvement of perhaps greater importance than that effected with regard to allotments is to be found in the provision for the settlement of wages at the termination of the voyage. The evils of the system which permitted the seaman to be turned adrift, penniless, directly his ship arrived in port have been referred to in Chapter XIII. In such a position his chances of escaping the land sharks were small indeed; for, unless he was fortunate enough to have friends at hand to furnish him with means, he was almost compelled to have recourse to those who were only too eager to provide him with both necessities and luxuries on credit. Under the new law the owner or master is bound to pay the seaman at the termination of his engagement either two pounds or one-fourth the balance of wages that may be due, whichever is least, and the remainder of the balance is to be paid within two days after the seaman leaves the ship. In the event of this not being done the full rate of wages is to be payable until the final settlement is made.

Next to the abolition of the advance note this arrangement for furnishing the seaman with a small amount of ready cash, immediately on his arrival, is perhaps one of the most useful provisions of the new Act. The importance of rendering aid at this critical moment has been recognised by the Government for some time past. In January, 1878, the Board of Trade established on the Thames what is known as the 'Midge' system of discharging crews. This system has been gradually extended, and at the present time it is in force at seventeen or eighteen of the principal ports in the country. Seamen arriving at places where this arrangement has been adopted, and wishing to proceed to other ports without waiting for the settlement of their wages, can obtain from the Board of Trade officials a railway pass to their destinations, together with an advance of ten shillings, or one pound under exceptional circumstances. This accommodation is afforded only when there is a balance of wages of at least three

Payment  
of wages.

The  
'Midge'  
system.

pounds due, and it is necessary for the seaman to sign a form authorising the superintendent to receive the balance from the owner or master when the remainder of the crew are discharged. When this settlement takes place the superintendent advises the Mercantile Marine Office at the port to which the seaman has proceeded that the balance of wages, less the pocket money advanced and the charge for railway fare, may be paid.

Thus far the 'Midge' system bids fair to be successful. In speaking at the annual meeting of the Chamber of Shipping in 1881, the Hon. Evelyn Ashley, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, said:—

'It is astonishing how much of late years the character and social position of our seamen have been raised, and how much their improvidence has diminished. Very much of that is due to the operation of the Savings Bank scheme of the Board of Trade and the system of transmission of wages. There has been a sum of 130,000*l.* transmitted to the homes of seamen since it was first started. The scheme is young, but it has already been established in London, Shields, Cardiff, Liverpool, Greenock, Gravesend, Swansea, Plymouth, Dundee, Glasgow, and Bristol, and you will understand the advantage of seamen being able to go home on landing, instead of having to wait while accounts are made out at the port of arrival, exposed to the harpies who prey upon them, and I hope gentlemen here will influence their captains to use this effective means of influencing for good the character of the men.'

Up to March 31, 1882, a sum of 260,000*l.* had been transmitted by means of this system.

No doubt a considerable proportion of seamen are naturally reckless and imprudent. These characteristics are in a measure produced by the peculiar circumstances which surround the sailor's life, and it is not likely that they will ever be completely overcome by means of any legislation or official machinery. But the results achieved in the Royal Navy show plainly that a great deal, at all events, may be done in this direction. At the commencement of the present century the man-of-war's man was as extravagant and as careless with his money as was the merchant seaman. Indeed he was encouraged in these failings by the authorities, in order that he might quickly get rid of his earnings and then seek service afloat again. The mistake of all this has now been recognised, and by means of the allotment system and the Naval Savings Bank the seaman of the Royal Navy has been metamorphosed to such an extent that he would hardly be recognised by his predecessors of the last generation. According to the evidence

given by Commander Dawson before the Select Committee, on the Merchant Seamen Bill, 1878, 'more than one-half the men-of-war's men entitled to allot, viz., those above boyhood and serving abroad, do so. About 17,000 men allot monthly, about 320,000*l.* per annum.' Commander Dawson attributes the great improvement which has taken place in the men to the improved rules and regulations of the naval authorities and especially 'in connection with the matter of paying.'

Of course the crews of men-of-war at the present day are composed to a certain extent of picked men; and it is too much to expect that the general condition of our merchant seamen can be brought on a level with that of the men who serve in the Royal Navy. It is unfortunately the case that the merchant service is used as a kind of refuge by large numbers of men who may be classed as hopeless characters, and these will never be reached by any legislation or schemes which can possibly be devised for encouraging habits of prudence. At the same time it is no less certain that the law, and the custom which had grown, as it were, into law, with regard to the payment of wages, have acted as direct incentives to improvidence and have done much to demoralise the men of the merchant service. The sailor has been encouraged to spend a portion of his wages extravagantly before he is legally entitled to a single penny; and his employer has been empowered to send him ashore destitute on the completion of the voyage. He has thus been forced into the hands of the crimps. There is little cause for surprise that his hard-earned wages—the money which in many cases he has gained by enduring great privations at the risk of his life—should quickly vanish amidst such conditions. Indeed, there would be far more cause for wonder if the case were otherwise. To force the seaman into debt with the crimp and lodging-house keeper—to pay him a comparatively large sum in hard cash after he has been enduring months of hardship and when he is surrounded by temptation—and then to expect him to act with judicious prudence is to expect moral impossibilities.

With respect to discipline, the Act of 1880 has abolished the penalty of imprisonment for desertion and absence without leave, and has made a provision to the effect that when legal proceedings are instituted between shipowners and seamen the court may rescind any contract which may have been entered into. In short, until seamen join their ships, the Employers and Workmen Act now applies to them as well as to mechanics or labourers on shore. Considerable opposition to this modification of the law has been urged on the part of shipowners. Before the Select Committee it was maintained that

Disciplinary clauses.



the change would render the ship's agreement worthless, that it would increase desertion, and that, from the usually indifferent character of the men who are shipped as substitutes, its general tendency would be to demoralise the fore-castle. It was further alleged that the suggested alteration would make it almost impossible to secure the attendance of crews on board at the time fixed for sailing.

To judge from the numerous complaints made since the passing of the Act of 1880, it would seem that these apprehensions were not altogether groundless. At the same time, in the absence of any reliable statistics showing the number of cases in which vessels are detained by the refusal of crews to proceed on board, it is difficult to form an opinion as to how far these complaints are justified by the facts. The passing of the Act was strongly opposed in many quarters, and the evidence brought to show that, so far as the disciplinary clauses are concerned, the measure is a failure, may possibly not be altogether unbiassed.

Crimping.

With a view to check the operations of the crimps among seamen who have just arrived in port, the recent Act imposes a penalty on any unauthorised person who goes on board a vessel without the permission of the master before the crew have left or have been discharged. This provision settles a point with regard to which there has hitherto existed considerable doubt; in fact, serious difficulty had been experienced by the authorities in their efforts to suppress crimping, in consequence of the previous uncertainty of the law with regard to the time when unauthorised persons might legally go on board. The importance of this amendment may be gathered from the evidence given before the Select Committee by Captain Pitman with respect to the results which have been obtained by the Board of Trade staff upon the river Thames. Captain Pitman says:—"Up to the year 1866, ships arriving in the Thames were beset with crimps and characters of the worst description, disgraceful scenes took place on board, and it was often dangerous for the pilots to take them up the river through their crews being drunk from liquor provided by the crimps, and the fighting and quarrelling which took place for the seamen's baggage. The Board of Trade have by degrees taken steps to prevent this disgraceful state of things by engaging for some years past the services of a small force of metropolitan police, and then by placing the steamer "Midge" on the river, to assist and exercise a general supervision. . . . The success which has attended these efforts may be judged by the highly satisfactory state in which ships now arrive and proceed up the river without being boarded by

or the crew tampered with by crimps, until they reach the docks, where, by the 237th section of the Merchant Shipping Act, the police are powerless to interfere after the ship has arrived at her place of discharge.'

Under the new law any Board of Trade officer may arrest unauthorised persons found on board newly-arrived vessels before the crews have been discharged, and the power thus conferred will no doubt prove of great utility to the staff whose duty it is to carry into effect the scheme for the transmission of wages above referred to.

The Act deals also with the question of seamen's lodging-houses by empowering the sanitary authorities of seaports to frame bye-laws for the regulation of such houses, and to grant licences to the persons by whom they are kept. It was urged by several of the witnesses examined before the Select Committee that a measure of this kind would tend to strengthen the hands of the local authorities in dealing with crimping, and that it would eventually put a stop to the worst form of the evil; but, except in a few instances, this provision has not as yet been carried into practical effect.

It is unsatisfactory to find that cases of scurvy are still far from uncommon among the crews of long-voyage ships. Indeed since 1873 the disease has been upon the increase. From a Parliamentary paper issued in March last, it appears that the number of outbreaks since 1866 have been as follows:—

Year	Outbreaks	Year	Outbreaks	Year	Outbreaks	Year	Outbreaks	Year	Outbreaks
1866	33	1869	22	1872	40	1875	58	1878	84
1867	88	1870	22	1873	19	1876	60	1879	93
1868	90	1871	34	1874	30	1877	80	1880	92
								1881	99

It is evident that the supply of limejuice, as provided for by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1867, is not of itself sufficient to stamp out the evil, and the general opinion now seems to be that a more effectual preventive is to be found in the adoption of a better dietary scale. In January last the Board of Trade issued the following circular upon the subject:—

'The attention of the Board of Trade having been drawn to the increase of scurvy on board British ships since 1873, a Report on the whole subject—"SEA SCURVY, FOOD SCALES, ANTI-SCORBUTICS"—has been recently prepared and forwarded to the Local Marine Boards for their observations.

'The conclusions arrived at in this Report were as follows:—

'1. That scurvy has been on the increase in British ships since 1873.

'2. That limejuice of *itself* will not prevent scurvy, and that too much reliance is placed on it to the neglect of varied food scales.

'3. That limejuice, in connection with fresh or preserved meat and vegetables, may prevent scurvy.

'4. That the dietary scale of ships should, therefore, include a fair proportion of fresh and "preserved" meats, as distinguished from "salted" meats.

'5. That more fresh vegetables should be carried, notably raw potatoes. No satisfactory reason is given why fresh potatoes cannot be carried on board British ships. The allegation that they will not keep good on board ship is clearly disproved by the fact that they do keep on board United States ships, and will keep for a fair time anywhere else.

'6. That it is not at present desirable to insert a statutory scale of diet in the Articles of Agreement with crews serving on long voyages, though it may possibly be necessary hereafter, unless the shipowners themselves move in the matter.

'The replies received from the Local Marine Boards have confirmed these views, especially as regards the articles of diet referred to therein, and Superintendents are therefore requested to take every opportunity of urging upon owners of vessels sailing on long voyages the necessity of supplying their crews with fresh potatoes, molasses, &c., and a larger supply of fresh or preserved meats, in lieu of salt beef and pork.'

Accommodation on board.

Medical officer's report.

With regard to the question of accommodation, it is to be feared that the arrangements on board many of our merchant ships leave much to be desired. In the smaller class of sailing ships, especially, the forecabin is too often but a wretched hole, in which only slight attention is paid either to comfort or to the first laws of health. And even in many of the larger class of vessels, where these points might easily be attended to, it would seem that matters are in a most unsatisfactory state. In reporting on the British Seamen's Hospital at Constantinople in December 1878, Dr. Patterson drew attention to the 'really filthy state' in which men came to that institution. He states that, 'the firemen and stokers, as a class, become ruined in health at an early age. Heart disease, glandular and kidney diseases, are quickly developed in them, and this probably is due in a great measure to the fact that the function of the skin is almost entirely suppressed under ordinary conditions of temperature. This acts both as an exciting and predisposing cause to these forms of disease. It is a rare exception to find any accommodation for personal cleanliness in steamers, where everything is at hand for the purpose. From a



hygienic point of view the mercantile marine to this part of the world can only be considered as a large disease-producing establishment, which must eventually tell seriously on the supply of able-bodied seaworthy men.'

The Board of Trade caused copies of this report to be sent to a large number of shipowners, as well as to the different Local Marine Boards, and invited expressions of opinion upon the subject generally. The report and the replies were printed in the form of a House of Commons Return in August 1879. The replies are extremely interesting, and they show that there exists a considerable variety of opinion among owners with regard to the important subject referred to in Dr. Patterson's report. They may be roughly divided into two classes, viz., those which trace the evil to the men themselves, and those which admit that the blame rests partly with the shipowner. Many owners maintain that there are at present ample facilities for promoting cleanliness, but that large numbers of the men, and especially the firemen and stokers, are hopelessly diseased, and filthy in their habits, and that it would be useless to attempt to improve their condition. It is asserted that the firemen are often 'broken in health through drink and debauchery;' that many of them are nothing but 'shore labourers of the lowest class;' that they 'are so scantily furnished with apparel that they have hardly a change of clothing;' and that numbers of them 'prefer to live in dirt, and if you turned steamers into huge baths, their skins would be as foul as ever.' It is also pointed out that, as a rule, neither firemen nor sailors are swimmers, so that they rarely avail themselves of a swim, a luxury they might frequently have in the different Mediterranean ports. Other owners, however, admit that the fault does not rest entirely with the men. Messrs. Burns and MacIver, for example, express the opinion that—

Ship-  
owners'  
opinions  
on the  
question.

'As to many steamers, . . . and a certain class of sailing vessels trading to the Mediterranean and elsewhere, with no inspection of any kind, and undermanned, there cannot be a doubt but that their sanitary condition is very defective, and requires looking after. With confined forecastles, deficient in height, space, and ventilation, combined with indifferent food, there must be a tendency to breed and foster disease, more especially with a deteriorated physique, which unfortunately many of such crews possess.'

And with regard to the question of food, Mr. B. Papayanni, writing from Liverpool, remarks:—

'I am informed that some East Coast steamship owners feed their crews at the rate of about ninepence per man per day, while the cost

to Liverpool shipowners trading in the Levant is about three times as much ; therefore, I am inclined to think that the weakness of the blood and emaciated condition of the men, referred to by Dr. Patterson, must be attributed to slow starvation, as well as to bad ventilation and want of personal cleanliness.

Messrs. W. Laing and Co., of Leith, report :—

‘ We fully recognise the value of cleanliness in the personal habits of our crews, and we issue a rule, which we cause to be enforced, that the forecabin in which the seamen and firemen live be emptied and thoroughly cleaned and scoured at very short intervals, and we believe that this compulsory cleansing of their living place tends to preserve the self-respect of the men, and causes them to attend better to their own cleanliness. It at any rate prevents the accumulation of dirt, and keeps away vermin.’

On the whole, it is tolerably clear that there is a certain amount of blame attaching to both sides. No doubt there is a considerable proportion of men in the merchant service whose condition may be regarded as irreclaimable ; but it is more than probable that the treatment they receive has helped to intensify the evil. In these days of close profits owners are sometimes tempted to cut everything in the shape of wages, food, and accommodation, to a minimum, and to treat the question of the health and comfort of their crews as a matter of altogether secondary importance. That this policy is extremely prejudicial to the general condition of our merchant seamen is clear ; and that a more liberal course would not ultimately prove the less economical, the success achieved by some of our largest and best-managed shipping firms, who systematically attend to these details, would seem plainly to show.

Practical  
qualifica-  
tions of  
seamen.

As regards the practical qualifications of seamen the recent Act provides that in future a man shall not be entitled to the rating of A.B. until he has served at sea for four years before the mast, or in the case of fishermen, three years’ service in decked fishing-vessels and one year’s sea service in a trading vessel. But this regulation does not apply to men who have been rated, and who have served as A.B.’s before the passing of the Act. The provision for the rating of seamen is a modification of the proposal that a system of examination should be instituted, and that no man should be allowed to obtain the rank of A.B. until he had obtained a certificate proving his competency. What will be the practical result of the new arrangement it is at present difficult to say. That the object in view is a most important one there can be no question. If, as stated by the Liverpool Committee of Shipowners, it sometimes happens that ‘ out of crews of

twenty and twenty-five, not more than three or four know the compass, can steer, heave the lead, or perform any other of the duties of the seaman,' it is hardly necessary to remark that the question is one which demands serious consideration.

It must be admitted that the problem to be solved is one of no small difficulty. Even if the possession of certificates of competency were insisted on, as some shipowners have suggested, it is to be feared that a system of wholesale evasion would soon arise. Apart from all other considerations, the facilities for avoiding a regulation of this kind are very great. It would not be easy to prevent such certificates from passing into the hands of men other than their rightful owners, seeing that large numbers of seamen are constantly engaging themselves under assumed names without ever being detected. The case of the certificated officer differs considerably from that of the seaman. The latter would have but little to lose, while the officer would risk the sacrifice of his whole professional career if discovered in an attempt to evade the law. Moreover, the chance of misrepresentation on the part of the seamen being discovered, especially at large ports where many thousands of hands are being shipped in the course of each year, would be small.

For the purpose of enabling seamen to prove their practical qualifications the London Local Marine Board in 1877 instituted a system of voluntary examinations, and issued certificates of competency to men who succeeded in passing the prescribed test. At present the system is entirely voluntary, and thus far it does not appear to have proved a success. Mr. Duncan, in the course of his evidence before the Select Committee, stated that shipowners would be willing to pay extra wages to men holding certificates of this description.

Certificates  
of com-  
petency for  
seamen.

There can be no doubt that large numbers of men ship as A.B.'s who have no title to that rating. As Mr. Duncan pointed out, with the great increase which is taking place in shipping, and the growing demand for seamen, 'men go to sea as ordinary seamen for one voyage, or it may be two, and then ship as able seamen.' The consequence is, their incapacity is soon detected by the officers, and disputes arise. Mr. Duncan deplored the entire abolition of the old apprentice system, and suggested that it should be revived in a modified form by compelling shipowners either to employ a certain number of apprentices, or to contribute to a fund to be devoted to the purpose of training seamen in training-ships. Mr. Peterson also considered the abolition a mistake, and referred to it as having caused a general deterioration among the men.

Incom-  
petent  
hands.

Of the compulsory apprentice system, however, or of the prospect



*Return of the Number of Boys on board the Mercantile*

Ship	Where stationed	When established	From what class are the boys received
Indefatigable .	Liverpool . .	1864	Poor boys nominated by subscription.
Wellesley . .	Newcastle . .	1868	Destitute and sent by magistrates' warrants.
Mars . . .	Dundee . .	1870	Destitute and orphans not having been convicted.
Southampton .	Hull . . .	1868	Destitute and by magistrates' warrants.
Formidable . .	Bristol . . .	1869	Street arabs not convicted of crime.
Cumberland . .	Helensburgh, N.B.	1870	Street arabs . . . . .
Exmouth . . .	Grays, Essex . .	1870	Pauper class principally . . .
Gibraltar . . .	Belfast . . .	1872	Homeless and destitute . . .
Olio . . . .	Menai Straits . .	1877	Homeless and destitute . . .
Mount Edgecumbe	Saltash . . .	—	—

of its revival it is now unnecessary to speak at any length. In all probability it has disappeared never to return. But it may be pointed out that the evil complained of with regard to the frequent discovery of lubbers under the guise of able seamen is in a large measure attributable to the omission of masters to take steps for their own protection. In nine cases out of ten it will be found that these incompetent hands are provided with discharge certificates, vouching for their ability as well as for their good conduct. Masters have the power to disrate men who are found to be incapable of performing their duties satisfactorily, and to give them certificates at the end of the voyage according to their abilities. But the cases in which this power is used are quite exceptional. For the sake of avoiding a little unpleasantness, masters allow the matter to drop; and the result is that the lubber is passed on to another ship, with a certificate showing that he is an A.B. with a V.G. character.

Training-ships and Naval Reserve.

Since 1875 a considerable number of training-ships have accepted the terms laid down by the Admiralty with regard to the training of boys for the Navy and Royal Naval Reserves. The table given above is taken from the report made by Admiral Phillimore on his resigning command of the Reserves in November, 1879.

In commenting on this return Admiral Phillimore observes:—

*Training-ships who have accepted the Terms of the Circular.*

By what charity supported	Age	Number of boys				
		That can be accommodated on board	Now on board	Sent to sea in 1879	Sent in to the Navy in 1879	Sent in to Royal Naval Reserve 1879
Voluntary subscriptions . . . .	12 to 16	250	250	61	4	19
State aid, 5s. a week, and by subscriptions.	Not under 14	300	310	54	7	—
State aid, 4s. 6d. a week, and subscriptions.	12 to 14	320	315	58	3	—
State aid, 5s. a week, and subscriptions.	11 to 14	240	265	24	—	—
State aid, 5s. a week, and subscriptions.	About 14	300	230	83	9	—
State aid, 5s. a week, and subscriptions.	11 to 14	250	363	72	4	—
Same as Metropolitan District Schools.	12 to 15½	600	587	105	4	16
State aid and subscriptions . . . .	Under 14	800	184	13	1	—
State aid and subscriptions . . . .	Under 12	264	264	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—

‘The Admiralty supply to each ship of the above a gunnery instructor, with a salary of 3s. a day besides his pension, guns, rifles, cutlasses, single sticks, &c., for drilling the boys; grant 3*l.* capitation grant for every duly qualified boy who volunteers for the Reserves, and 25*l.* a head for every boy that enters the Navy.

‘The interior economy of these ships is managed by their own committees. Each ship receives a special warrant from the Lords of the Admiralty to fly a blue ensign, with the device of the city to which they are attached on the fly of the ensign.

‘They are inspected annually by the Admiral Superintendent of Naval Reserves. With one exception all are commanded by retired naval officers. I look upon the establishment of these ships as a very great success in every way. I would particularly mention the “Exmouth,” off Grays, for the boys of the London poor, and the “Indefatigable,” at Liverpool, as having the pre-eminence among them, where the liberal diet and careful training have produced the most rapid improvements in the boys under their care.

‘All, however, are doing excellent service, and will do great good to the mercantile marine.

‘In the short time that has elapsed since their accepting the Admiralty terms, 76 boys have already joined the Royal Naval Reserves from these vessels. Some of these establishments who

receive their boys at a very early age cannot fully develop their system for three or four more years.

‘Some are also much restricted in their resources from difficulties of a pecuniary nature, which have not yet been overcome.

‘I only regret that the Marine Society’s ship “Warspite” has not yet agreed to assist the Naval Reserves in the manner pointed out by the Circular.’

As regards the Reserves, the report states that the first class is now ‘composed of a very fine body of seamen, the leading and best men of our merchant ships.’ And Admiral Phillimore considers it important that none but fully qualified able seamen of excellent character should be admitted to this class of the Reserves, seeing that the country expends a large sum in its support—each man receiving 10*l.* per annum, and being entitled to a pension. It appears that the second class, which is composed of ordinary seamen and fishermen, can be increased at any time without difficulty. ‘The third class,’ to quote again from the report, ‘which will, I hope, form a very important element in our future reserves, and exercise an excellent influence on our mercantile marine, is composed of volunteers from the training-ships.’

Rear-Admiral H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who, as Admiral Superintendent of the Naval Reserves, reported on the force in January, 1882, also expressed a high opinion of its efficiency. The Duke stated that in no instance during the inspection he had recently made, had he found reason to express other than satisfaction at the manner in which the men had gone through their drills.

Admiral Phillimore pointed out that, although the number of men who constitute the Reserve bears but a small proportion to the total number of seamen employed in British vessels, it forms a very considerable proportion of the men who are really eligible. Of the 200,000 men employed, it is estimated that there are not more than 28,000 from whom the Reserve can be selected. The remainder are made up of engineers, firemen, officers, and foreigners, whilst about 38,000 seamen are classed as ineligible on account of misconduct or incapacity from physical or other causes.

The list of Royal Naval Reserve officers in 1882 contained the names of 79 lieutenants, 78 sub-lieutenants, and 121 midshipmen.

According to an appendix to the report of the Select Committee on the Merchant Seamen Bill (1878) the total number of masters possessing certificates of competency was estimated in that year at about 26,000. Of this number less than two per cent. possess what are known as extra certificates, *i.e.* certificates which are obtained by

Number  
of Naval  
Reserve  
officers.  
Officers in  
Mercantile  
Marine.



passing an examination of a higher character than that used under the ordinary regulations. This additional test is entirely voluntary, and was instituted for the purpose, not only of enabling masters to prove their proficiency in the superior branches of navigation and seamanship, but also of showing that the possessor of an extra certificate is a trustworthy and responsible man. According to the latest regulations the extra examination may take place when an applicant goes up for an ordinary master's certificate, or after he has passed as ordinary master, but, 'the extra certificate will not be issued unless and until the applicant has served afloat for eight years, two of which must have been in command of a ship as master, and not then unless the applicant produces testimonials in all respects satisfactory.'

In practice it is found that less than two per cent. of masters trouble themselves to undergo the honorary test. The result would seem to show that, in selecting men to command their vessels, shipowners are guided to a large extent by considerations of which Government examiners can take no account.

If we may judge from the number of cases in which inquiry has been held on breaches of discipline by masters and officers, the general conduct of the men who command our mercantile navy leaves little to be desired so far as serious offences are concerned. Of the 26,000 certificated masters it is tolerably certain that at least 18,000 are constantly engaged afloat, seeing that there are about 20,000 vessels on the British register; and the number of mates afloat can hardly be less than 40,000. The following table, taken from the *Wreck Register*, shows the number of cases in which charges of grave misconduct have been preferred, and the results of the investigations held during the three years ending June 30, 1882:—

Breaches of discipline by masters and mates.

	Number of investigations	Number of masters convicted			Number of officers convicted			Total number of persons convicted
		Certificates		Censured or admonished	Certificates		Censured or admonished	
		Cancelled	Suspended		Cancelled	Suspended		
1879-80	52	5	10	12	1	11	10	49
1880-81	78	4	12	13	5	16	9	59
1881-82	59	3	8	8	4	23	6	52

This gives an average of about one conviction for every thousand certificate-holders, and looking to the arduous and trying nature of the duties performed by the officers of the mercantile marine—to the fact that they are constantly being placed in positions where a

momentary error of judgment is sufficient to endanger their certificates—and to the many temptations by which they are beset—it must be admitted that the above figures speak well for their general behaviour.

The Register contains also a table showing the number of cases in which certificates have been either suspended or cancelled on account of the holders having been convicted of criminal offences. Here again the figures are satisfactorily low :—

	Number of masters' and officers' certificates	
	Cancelled	Suspended
1879-80	11	8
1880-81	10	2
1881-82	2	2

Foreign  
competi-  
tion in  
shipping  
trade.

As regards outside competition the position of the British ship-owners is now threatened with artificial interference on the part of certain foreign states. In order to secure a more satisfactory share of the world's carrying trade, France has already determined to force the growth of its mercantile marine by means of Government bounties both on navigation and construction. And not long since there were rumours that both Germany and Italy were contemplating the adoption of a similar course. On the other side of the Atlantic, too, certain measures have been submitted to the United States Congress for the purpose of encouraging the shipping trade; but, according to the report of the British ambassador at Washington these proposals are not likely to take a practical shape.

It is not surprising that France should regard the present condition of her mercantile marine with a certain amount of uneasiness. During the last ten years the total tonnage of French vessels has shown a small but steady decline; and it is natural that the French Government should be anxious to arrest the downward movement. The total tonnage of German and Italian vessels in the same period has remained almost stationary. The same remark applies to the United States vessels (foreign trade) until 1879, when a considerable falling off took place. The following table is extracted from the Parliamentary paper on the *Progress of British Merchant Shipping*, dated April 2, 1883, and shows the tonnage of the merchant navies of the principal maritime countries of Europe and of the United States for the years 1870 and 1878-82 :—

Countries	1870	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882
	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons
British Empire (including United Kingdom) . . .	7,149,134	8,329,421	8,462,364	8,447,171	8,575,560	8,796,517
United Kingdom . . .	5,617,693	6,492,121	6,521,289	6,519,772	6,641,267	6,908,650
United States . . .						
Registered for over-sea (Foreign Trade)	1,516,800	1,620,047	1,491,533	1,352,810	1,335,586	1,292,294
Enrolled for Home Trade, including lake and river steamers . . .	2,677,940	2,583,718	2,678,068	2,715,224	2,722,148	2,873,639
Norway . . .	1,022,515	1,526,689	1,510,669	1,518,658	1,520,404	—
Total German Empire . . .	982,355	1,129,129	1,171,286	1,182,097	1,194,407	—
Italy . . .	1,012,164	1,029,157	1,005,972	999,196	989,057	—
France . . .	1,072,048	975,883	932,853	919,298	914,373	—
Sweden . . .	346,862	536,610	530,803	542,642	—	—
Holland . . .	389,614	358,995	347,665	328,281	305,046	—
Denmark . . .	178,646	251,209	251,958	249,466	253,409	—

The tonnage added to the merchant navies of the United Kingdom and the other principal maritime countries of Europe in the years 1878–82 was as follows :—

Countries	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882
	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons	Tons
United Kingdom . . .	464,511	410,804	411,736	561,750	714,521
Norway . . .	63,943	53,433	71,427	—	—
Sweden . . .	13,990	10,550	13,152	—	—
Germany . . .	82,642	105,372	92,941	—	—
Holland . . .	22,216	18,138	14,690	18,883	—
France . . .	44,859	43,728	46,830	55,644	—
Italy . . .	39,080	27,486	31,863	41,090	—

From this table it will be seen that in 1880 (the last year for which the figures are complete) 411,000 tons were added to the British register, as compared with 270,900 tons added to the registers of the whole of the other countries named in the table, while in 1882 the enormous addition of 714,000 tons was made to the shipping of the United Kingdom.

At the annual meeting of the Chamber of Shipping, in 1881, it was stated that the amount of tonnage under construction in this country on December 31, 1880, was 695,000 tons, as compared with 430,000 tons on December 31, 1879, and that nine-tenths, or 632,000 tons, of the former amount consisted of steamships. On the same occasion the Hon. Evelyn Ashley remarked :—

‘We are accustomed to regard the last decade merely as a period



of trial ; but I find that the increase of steam tonnage in the United Kingdom between 1870 and 1879 has been 1,500,000 tons. There has certainly been a slight simultaneous decrease of sailing tonnage, but it is quite unimportant, after taking into account that a steam ton is equivalent in effective result to four sailing tons. You have this overwhelming fact also, that in the year 1879 the tonnage of this country bears the proportion of 58 per cent. to the steam tonnage of the whole of the rest of the world.

From a national point of view the foregoing figures are eminently satisfactory ; and they afford, moreover, some indication of the work which foreign taxpayers have before them if they are determined on forcing any appreciable portion of the carrying trade from English hands. We need not here pause to discuss the merits of any line of economical policy which other nations may choose to adopt ; but it may be pointed out that, although it rests within the power of any maritime state to develop its mercantile, as well as its fighting, navy at the public expense, universal experience tends to show that national industries have rarely been nurtured into hardy maturity by means of state support. The present supremacy of England's mercantile marine is not due to any artificial assistance on the part of the Government, but to private enterprise and skill, and to the fact that England enjoys great advantages in the possession of abundant materials for shipbuilding purposes. Until some of these conditions undergo a great change for the worse it is not likely that our mercantile navy will suffer any serious decline.

The great development which is now taking place in the use of steel in the construction of ships seems likely to prove an additional advantage on the side of England, seeing that this is a material which can be produced at less cost in this country than in any other. When steel ships can be built as skilfully and as cheaply at Havre, or Bremen, or Genoa, as upon the Clyde or at Barrow-in-Furness ; and when Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians take to a seafaring life as readily as Englishmen, no doubt our carrying trade will have begun to wane. But as yet there is no cause for alarm. It would be idle to assert that our position cannot be affected in any way by foreign bounties ; but there is good reason for assuming that it cannot be injured permanently by these means, and that the influence of state grants will constitute but temporary disturbances. Steamers can not only be built more cheaply and better here than elsewhere, but English owners have an unquestionable pre-eminence in the economical management of them, and these advantages will certainly be sufficient to outweigh the artificial aids which foreign Governments may offer.

## MERCHANT SEAMEN (PAYMENT OF WAGES AND RATING) ACT, 1880.

*An Act to amend the Law relating to the Payment of Wages and Rating of Merchant Seamen.*

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows; (that is to say,)

1. This Act may be cited as the Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act, 1880.

This Act shall be construed as one with the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876, and those Acts and this Act may be cited collectively as the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1880.

2. (1.) After the first day of August one thousand eight hundred and eighty-one, any document authorising or promising, or purporting to authorise or promise, the future payment of money on account of a seaman's wages conditionally on his going to sea from any port in the United Kingdom, and made before those wages have been earned, shall be void.

(2.) No money paid in satisfaction or in respect of any such document shall be deducted from a seaman's wages, and no person shall have any right of action, suit, or set-off against the seaman or his assignee in respect of any money so paid or purporting to have been so paid.

(3.) Nothing in this section shall affect any allotment note made under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

3. (1.) Every agreement with a seaman which is required by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, to be made in the form sanctioned by the Board of Trade shall, if the seaman so require, stipulate for the allotment of any part not exceeding one half of the wages of the seaman in favour of one or more of the persons mentioned in section one hundred and sixty-nine of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, as amended by this section.

(2.) The allotment may also be made in favour of a savings bank, and in that case shall be in favour of such persons and carried into effect in such manner as may be for the time being directed by regulations of the Board of Trade, and section one hundred and sixty-nine of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, shall be construed as if the said persons were named therein.

(3.) The sum received in pursuance of such allotment by a savings bank shall be paid out only on an application made through a superintendent of a mercantile marine office or the Board of Trade, by the seaman himself, or, in case of death, by some person to whom the same might be paid under section one hundred and ninety-nine of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

(4.) A payment under an allotment note shall begin at the expiration of one month, or, if the allotment is in favour of a savings bank, of three months, from the date of the agreement, or at such later date as may be fixed by the agreement, and shall be paid at the expiration of every sub-

Short title  
and con-  
struction.  
17 & 18  
Vict. c.  
104, &c.

Conditional  
advance  
notes il-  
legal.

17 & 18  
Vict. c.  
140.

Amend-  
ment of 17  
& 18 Vict  
c. 104, s.  
169, as to  
allotment  
notes.  
17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

sequent month, or of such other periods as may be fixed by the agreement, and shall be paid only in respect of wages earned before the date of payment.

(5.) For the purposes of this section 'savings bank' means a savings bank established under one of the Acts mentioned in the First Schedule to this Act.

4. In the case of foreign-going ships—

Rules as to  
payment of  
wages.

(1.) The owner or master of the ship shall pay to each seaman on account, at the time when he lawfully leaves the ship at the end of his engagement, two pounds, or one fourth of the balance due to him, whichever is least; and shall pay him the remainder of his wages within two clear days (exclusive of any Sunday, Fast day in Scotland, or Bank Holiday) after he so leaves the ship.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

(2.) The master of the ship may deliver the account of wages mentioned in section one hundred and seventy-one of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, to the seaman himself at or before the time when he leaves the ship instead of delivering it to a superintendent of a mercantile marine office.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

(3.) If the seaman consents, the final settlement of his wages may be left to the superintendent of a mercantile marine office under regulations to be made by the Board of Trade, and the receipt of the superintendent shall in that case operate as a release by the seaman under section one hundred and seventy-five of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

(4.) In the event of the seaman's wages or any part thereof not being paid or settled as in this section mentioned, then, unless the delay is due to the act or default of the seaman, or to any reasonable dispute as to liability, or to any other cause not being the act or default of the owner or master, the seaman's wages shall continue to run and be payable until the time of the final settlement thereof.

Penalty for  
being on  
board ship  
without  
permission  
before sea-  
men leave.  
See 17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104,  
s. 237.

(5.) Where a question as to wages is raised before the superintendent of a mercantile marine office between the master or owner of a ship and a seaman or apprentice, if the amount in question does not exceed five pounds, the superintendent may adjudicate, and the decision of the superintendent in the matter shall be final; but if the superintendent is of opinion that the question is one which ought to be decided by a court of law he may refuse to decide it.

5. Where a ship is about to arrive, is arriving, or has arrived at the end of her voyage, every person not being in Her Majesty's service or not being duly authorised by law for the purpose, who—

(a.) goes on board the ship, without the permission of the master, before the seamen lawfully leave the ship at the end of their engagement, or are discharged (whichever last happens); or

(b.) being on board the ship, remains there after being warned to leave by the master, or by a police officer, or by any officer of the Board of Trade or of the Customs,

shall for every such offence be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds, or, at the discretion of the court, to imprisonment



for any term not exceeding six months; and the master of the ship or any officer of the Board of Trade may take him into custody, and deliver him up forthwith to a constable to be taken before a court or magistrate capable of taking cognizance of the offence, and dealt with according to law.

6. Whenever it is made to appear to Her Majesty—

(1.) That the Government of any foreign country has provided that unauthorised persons going on board of British ships which are about to arrive or have arrived within its territorial jurisdiction shall be subject to provisions similar to the provisions contained in the last preceding section as applicable to persons going on board British ships at the end of their voyages; and

Provisions contained in section 5 to apply to ships belonging to foreign countries in certain cases.

(2.) That the Government of such foreign country is desirous that the provisions of the said section shall apply to unauthorised persons going on board of ships belonging to such foreign country within the limits of British territorial jurisdiction;

Her Majesty may, by Order in Council, declare that the provisions of the said last preceding section shall apply to the ships of such country; and thereupon so long as the Order remains in force those provisions shall apply and have effect as if the ships of such country were British ships arriving, about to arrive, or which had arrived at the end of their voyage.

7. A seaman shall not be entitled to the rating of A.B., that is to say, of an able-bodied seaman, unless he has served at sea for four years before the mast, but the employment of fishermen in registered decked fishing vessels shall only count as sea service up to the period of three years of such employment; and the rating of A.B. shall only be granted after at least one year's sea service in a trading vessel in addition to three or more years' sea service on board of registered decked fishing vessels.

Rating of seamen.

Such service may be proved by certificates of discharge, by a certificate of service from the Registrar-General of Shipping and Seamen (which certificate the Registrar shall grant on payment of a fee not exceeding sixpence), and in which shall be specified whether the service was rendered in whole or in part in steam ship or in sailing ship, or by other satisfactory proof.

Nothing in this section shall affect a seaman who has been rated and has served as A.B. before the passing of this Act.

8. Where a proceeding is instituted in or before any court in relation to any dispute between an owner or master of a ship and a seaman or apprentice to the sea service, arising out of or incidental to their relation as such, or is instituted for the purpose of this section, the court, if, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, they think it just so to do, may rescind any contract between the owner or master and the seaman or apprentice, or any contract of apprenticeship, upon such terms as the court may think just, and this power shall be in addition to any other jurisdiction which the court can exercise independently of this section.

Power of Court to rescind contract between owner or master and seaman or apprentice.

For the purposes of this section the term 'court' includes any magistrate or justice having jurisdiction in the matter to which the proceeding relates.

Licensing  
seamen's  
lodging-  
houses.

9. It shall be lawful for the sanitary authority of any seaport town to pass bye-laws for the licensing of seamen's lodging-houses, for the periodical inspection of the same, for the granting to the persons to whom such licences are given, the authority to designate their houses as seamen's licensed lodging-houses, and for prescribing the penalties for the breach of the provisions of the bye-laws : Provided always, that no such bye-laws shall take effect till they have received the approval of the Board of Trade.

Desertion  
and absence  
without  
leave.

10. The following provisions shall from the commencement of this Act have operation within the United Kingdom :

A seaman or apprentice to the sea service shall not be liable to imprisonment for deserting or for neglecting or refusing without reasonable cause to join his ship or to proceed to sea in his ship, or for absence without leave at any time within twenty-four hours of his ship's sailing from any port, or for absence at any time without leave and without sufficient reason from his ship or from his duty.

Whenever either at the commencement or during the progress of any voyage any seaman or apprentice neglects or refuses to join or deserts from or refuses to proceed to sea in any ship in which he is duly engaged to serve, or is found otherwise absenting himself therefrom without leave, the master or any mate, or the owner, ship's husband, or consignee may, with or without the assistance of the local police officers or constables, who are hereby directed to give the same, if required, convey him on board ; Provided that if the seaman or apprentice so requires he shall first be taken before some court capable of taking cognizance of the matters to be dealt with according to law ; and that if it appears to the court before which the case is brought that the seaman or apprentice has been conveyed on board

taken before the court on improper or insufficient grounds, the master, mate, owner, ship's husband, or consignee, as the case may be, shall incur a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, but such penalty, if inflicted, shall be a bar to any action for false imprisonment.

If a seaman or apprentice to the sea service intends to absent himself from his ship or his duty, he may give notice of his intention, either to the owner or to the master of the ship, not less than forty-eight hours before the time at which he ought to be on board his ship ; and in the event of such notice being given, the court shall not exercise any of the powers conferred on it by section two hundred and forty-seven of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

Subject to the foregoing provision of this section, the powers conferred by section two hundred and forty-seven of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, may be exercised notwithstanding the abolition of imprisonment for desertion and similar offences, and of apprehension without warrant.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

Nothing in this section shall affect section two hundred and thirty-nine of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

Extension  
to seamen  
of 38 & 39  
Vict. c. 90.

11. The thirteenth section of the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875, shall be repealed in so far as it operates to exclude seamen and apprentices to the sea service from the said Act, and the said Act shall apply to seamen and apprentices to the sea service accordingly ; but such repeal shall not, in the absence of any enactment to the contrary, extend to or

affect any provision contained in any other Act of Parliament passed, or to be passed, whereby workmen is defined by reference to the persons to whom the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875, applies. ss & 39  
Vict. c. 90.

12. The enactments described in the Second Schedule to this Act shall be repealed as from the commencement of this Act within the United Kingdom. enactments  
in Second  
Schedule.

Provided that this repeal shall not affect—

(1) Anything duly done or suffered before the commencement of this Act under any enactment hereby repealed; or

(2) Any right or privilege acquired or any liability incurred before the commencement of this Act, under any enactment hereby repealed; or

(3) Any imprisonment, fine, or forfeiture, or other punishment incurred or to be incurred, in respect of any offence committed before the commencement of this Act, under any enactment hereby repealed; or

(4) The institution or prosecution to its termination of any investigation or legal proceeding, or any other remedy for prosecuting any such offence, or ascertaining, enforcing, or recovering any such liability, imprisonment, fine, forfeiture, or punishment as aforesaid, and any such investigation, legal proceeding, and remedy may be carried on as if this repeal had not been enacted.

#### FIRST SCHEDULE.

Chapter.	Savings Bank.
24 & 25 Viet. c. 14.	Post Office Savings Banks.
26 & 27 Viet. c. 87.	} Trustee Savings Banks.
17 & 18 Viet. c. 104. s. 180.	
19 & 20 Viet. c. 41.	
	} Seamen's Savings Banks.

#### SECOND SCHEDULE.

(17 & 18 Viet. c. 104. in part.)

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854,  
in part: namely,

In section two hundred and forty-three, sub-section (1), the words 'to imprisonment for any period not exceeding twelve weeks with or without hard labour; and also.'

In section two hundred and forty-three, sub-section (2), the words 'to imprisonment for any period not exceeding ten weeks with or without hard labour, and also at the discretion of the court.'

Section two hundred and forty-six.

In section two hundred and forty-seven the words 'instead of committing the offender to prison;'

And section two hundred and forty-eight.

*An Act to amend the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, so far as regards certain fees and expenses and sums receivable and payable by the Board of Trade.*

Be it enacted by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows



Short title  
and con-  
struction of  
Act.

17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104

Application  
of proceeds  
of unclaim-  
ed wreck  
towards  
payment of  
expenses  
connected  
with wreck.  
17 & 18  
Vict. c. 104.

Explana-  
tion of 14  
& 15 Vict.  
3. 102,  
s. 43.

14 & 15  
Vict. c. 102.

Provisions  
as to fees  
on exami-  
nation of  
engineers.  
25 & 26  
Vict. c. 63,  
s. 7.

39 & 40  
Vict. c. 80.

25 & 26  
Vict. c. 63.

1. This Act may be cited as the Merchant Shipping (Fees and Expenses) Act, 1880.

This Act shall be construed as one with the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and the Acts amending the same, and together with those Acts may be cited as the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1880.

2. Whereas under section four hundred and seventy-five of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, a receiver of wreck appointed under that Act is required to pay into the Exchequer the net proceeds of the sale of unclaimed wreck :

And whereas in pursuance of section four hundred and fifty-seven of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, the fees received by such receivers of wreck are carried to the Mercantile Marine Fund, and applied in defraying any expenses duly incurred in carrying into effect the purposes of the eighth part of that Act, in such manner as the Board of Trade direct :

And whereas the fees have been insufficient to defray such expenses, and the deficiency has been paid out of the said proceeds of unclaimed wreck, and the balance alone of such proceeds has been paid into the Exchequer, and it is expedient to sanction the payment of the said deficiency ; be it therefore enacted as follows :

Any deficiency so paid as aforesaid, before the thirty-first day of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighty, out of the proceeds of unclaimed wreck, shall be deemed to have been properly paid.

3. Whereas by section forty-three of the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act, 1851, it is provided that a seaman who ceases altogether for a continuous period of three years to pay his contribution to the fund shall forfeit all claim to any relief for himself, his widow, and children ; and it is expedient to amend the said enactment ; be it therefore enacted as follows :

The Board of Trade may remit the said forfeiture in the case of any seaman if he satisfies them that during the said continuous period of three years he had not served at sea for any time or for such time as to render it just for him to pay his contribution, and that such non-service at sea did not arise from his having left the sea service when still of age and strength to continue in it, and with the intention of not returning to the same.

Section forty-three of the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act, 1851, as amended by this section, shall apply to masters, as if they were mentioned therein in addition to seamen.

4. Whereas by section seven of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act, 1862, it is provided that the fees payable by applicants for examination for certificates of competency as engineers shall be carried to the account of the Mercantile Marine Fund, and at the time of the passing of that Act the salaries of the surveyors, by whom the examinations are conducted, were paid out of the Mercantile Marine Fund :

And whereas under section thirty-nine of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1876, the salaries of the said surveyors are paid out of moneys provided by Parliament ; and it is expedient that the fees should be paid into the Exchequer ; be it therefore enacted as follows :

The fees paid in pursuance of section seven of the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act, 1862, shall cease to be carried to the account of the Mercantile Marine Fund and shall be paid into the Exchequer.

5. All expenses incurred by general lighthouse authorities in pursuance of the Removal of Wrecks Act, 1877, shall be subject to the provisions contained in sections four hundred and twenty-two, four hundred and twenty-three, and four hundred and twenty-seven of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

6. Such reasonable costs as the Board of Trade from time to time allow of advertising or otherwise making known the establishment of or alterations in foreign lighthouses, buoys, and beacons to owners and masters of and other persons interested in British ships shall be paid out of the Mercantile Marine Fund.

7. Any payment made or forfeiture remitted or thing done before the passing of this Act which, if this Act had passed, would be legal, shall be deemed to have been legally made, remitted, or done.

Provisions  
as to ex-  
penses in-  
curred in  
removing  
wrecks.  
40 & 41

Vict. c. 16.

Costs of ad-

vertising

notices of

foreign sea

marks.

17 & 18

Vict. c. 104.

Application

of Act to

past pay-

ments.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## MARINE INSURANCE.

*Speech delivered in the House of Commons, March 12, 1875.*

MR. T. BRASSEY, in rising to call attention to the evidence relating to Marine Insurance taken by the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships, and to move :

Arguments  
for Royal  
Commis-  
sion.

‘That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying that she will be pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the state of the law, to report thereon, and to make recommendations with the view to establish the law and practice of Insurance on the principle of indemnity for losses actually sustained,’ said, it was a somewhat hazardous enterprise for a layman to bring under the consideration of the House a subject of so much difficulty as the law relating to Marine Insurance.

A knowledge of the law was not required in order to be convinced that where great facilities existed for insuring property in ships or goods at full, and in some cases at exaggerated value, such facilities had a tendency to produce carelessness in the management of shipping with all the attendant evils which sometimes occurred of deplorable loss of life at sea. If he could show that there was a concurrence of opinion among competent authorities in favour of considerable amendment and alteration in the law of marine insurance, he thought he should have done enough to justify the motion which he proposed to make for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject.

Evidence  
of Mr.  
Harper.

The facility for insuring at the full, and sometimes at an exaggerated value, was a primary cause of carelessness and recklessness. On this subject he would quote some remarks made by Mr. Harper, the Secretary of Lloyd’s Salvage Association, in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships. Mr. Harper pointed out that the care of a ship was divided into a hundred particulars—care in the selection of a master, care in the selection of a crew, care in securing that the ship should be in a proper state of



repair before leaving port, and that watchfulness was likely to be relaxed when the shipowner knew that, if his vessel were lost he would recover all the money he had invested in the ship, with, in some cases, a large profit in addition.

In order to show the extent to which under the various decisions which had been given in our courts of law marine insurance had been allowed to exceed that strict indemnity for loss which it was originally intended to secure, it would be more convenient that he should refer to a case that had actually occurred, and which illustrated the working of the law of marine insurance. The case was that of the 'Sir William Eyre,' which was brought under the notice of the Royal Commission by Mr. Cowen. That vessel sailed in 1863 from Glasgow to New Zealand. She was intended to discharge her cargo at Otago, then to proceed in ballast to Calcutta, and there to take in cargo, for which a freight amounting to 4,000*l.* was to be paid. The ship was stranded before she reached Otago, but she was temporarily repaired at the cost of the underwriters on the outward freight, and proceeded in ballast to Calcutta, where a further survey was made, and it was discovered that the ship was not worth repairing. She was lost shortly afterwards in the cyclone of October, 1864. The damage which the vessel was found at Calcutta to have sustained having been caused before she reached Otago, the underwriters on the policy to Otago were held liable to pay 6,000*l.* The shipowner had insured in the sum of 4,000*l.*, the chartered freight homewards from Calcutta; and as the ship had become a constructive total loss, the House of Lords held that the underwriters were bound to pay the 4,000*l.* Finally, the shipowner, before he knew that his vessel had been seriously injured, had insured her in the sum of 8,000*l.* by a time policy for three months after her arrival at Calcutta, and although the ship, when insured, was a total loss, he recovered his insurance. The total sum thus recovered amounted to 18,000*l.*, on a ship valued at only 8,000*l.* by the owners themselves. No doubt that was an extreme case; but other cases in which underwriters were called upon to pay the shipowners a sum considerably in excess of that which was necessary to provide an indemnity were of frequent occurrence.

He would now refer briefly to the various descriptions of marine policies, and point out the anomalies which arose under them.

The first was a valued policy, in which the value of a ship or goods was stated on the face of the policy. It might be reasonably supposed that where the value stated was considerably in excess of the real value of the ship or goods, the courts would refuse to sanc-

Case of the  
'Sir William Eyre.'

Valued  
policy.

tion such over-valuation, but that was not the doctrine held in our courts of law. Underwriters were not allowed to set aside the value, as stated in the valued policy, except upon plea and proof of fraud. When they turned from the commercial aspect of the question to those larger considerations which had reference to the safety of life at sea, he thought hon. members would be disposed to agree with the opinion of Mr. Justice Willes in an able memorandum which he had written on the subject of Marine Insurance, in which he said, 'The system of valued policies, whatever its convenience, and it is great, does encourage fraudulently-disposed people to put a high value on comparatively worthless vessels, and gives them an interest in the loss of their property.' Mr. Justice Willes had suggested a remedy for this state of things, and it was approved by the late Mr. Lamport, Mr. Stephenson, sometime Secretary to Lloyd's, by Mr. Squarey, Mr. Farrer, and other authorities of equal importance. These gentlemen agreed to adopt this recommendation, namely, that where an underwriter had reason to believe that the value in the policy was excessive, he should be allowed to plead such over-valuation as a defence to an action on the policy. The late Mr. Lamport, a practical shipowner, gave it as his opinion that the change proposed would not lead to unnecessary litigation, and that shipowners, when they knew that excessive valuations could not be recovered in the courts of law, would not be disposed to pay the premiums for insuring their vessels to excessive amounts.

Open  
policy.

The next description of policy was the open policy, in which the value of the ship or goods was not stated on the face of the policy. The principal anomaly in this case arose in connection with the insurance on freight. The doctrine of our law was, that where a loss occurred the amount recoverable from the underwriter should be the gross freight payable by the shipper or merchant to the shipowner. To show how this worked in practice he would take a case put before the Commission by Mr. Farrer. A steamer of 1,200 tons, bound for Calcutta and back through the Suez Canal, with a chartered freight on the outward and homeward voyage of 12,000*l.*, was insured in an open policy at the full value. Suppose the ship to be lost on the outward voyage in the Bay of Biscay, the shipowner was entitled to recover the gross freight of 12,000*l.*, although by the loss of his ship at the commencement of her voyage he had avoided paying for Suez Canal dues both ways 1,200*l.*, for coals at Calcutta 1,600*l.*, as well as the expenses for provisions at Calcutta, wages to the crew, and port charges, at Calcutta and London. The total saving by the loss of the vessel at the commencement of the voyage would thus amount

to 4,500%. Now, he asked whether a law could be considered satisfactory which permitted the shipowner to derive such an immense advantage if his ship were lost almost immediately after leaving port, instead of completing the voyage for which she had been insured. This anomaly is: where a loss occurred, the underwriter should be entitled to deduct from the amount payable to the shipowner those expenses which he had actually saved by the loss of his vessel. This rule might be defeated if shipowners were to insist on the freight being paid by merchants in advance; for it was a rule of our law that if a ship were lost the merchant could not recover the freight. But that was a doctrine peculiar to our law, and it had recently been disapproved by the Lord Chief Justice and other judges.

The next class of policy was the voyage policy, in which the implied warranty of seaworthiness only existed at the commencement of the voyage. In this case the excessive protection afforded by the present state of the law deprived the shipowner of the inducements which he ought to feel to keep his ship in a seaworthy condition. The anomaly seemed to him to be the more remarkable, because the voyage outward and homeward was treated as one voyage. Mr. Harper, in his evidence, stated that it had happened within his knowledge, that a ship from London to Shanghai had received considerable damage on her outward voyage, had discharged her cargo at Shanghai, had not been repaired, had taken in cargo for the homeward voyage, and had set forth in such a condition that there was great risk of her foundering. She had foundered, and because there was no implied seaworthiness on the departure of the vessel from Shanghai, the underwriters had been held liable to pay the insurance to the shipowners. This anomaly of the law might be removed if there was, as he believed there was in the American law, a continued implied warranty of seaworthiness throughout the voyage.

He came now to the last form of policy, a time policy, in which there was no implied warrant of seaworthiness. The hon. member for Hull (Mr. Norwood), in his evidence, explained that it might frequently happen that when a shipowner was effecting an insurance on his ship, he might not have obtained tidings of her for a considerable period, and, therefore, it would be unreasonable to ask him to give a warranty of seaworthiness. Mr. Butt, another of the witnesses who appeared before the Commission, suggested that the warranty of seaworthiness should commence at the time of the departure of the ship from the first port visited after the insurance was effected, where means existed for making repairs. He would



now point out the anomalous position the shipowners and the proprietors of goods respectively occupied under the operations of the rules of law relating to voyage policies and time policies. The shipowner could insure under a time policy, and could recover, though his ship was not seaworthy. The merchant must insure under a voyage policy; and if the ship was unseaworthy he could not recover. The shipowner, who had the real control over his ship, and was responsible for her equipment, could recover his insurance, even though he had neglected his duty; whereas the proprietor of goods, who was an innocent sufferer, could not recover, although he had no responsibility for the seaworthiness of the ship. The merchant had a remedy against the shipowners, but the bills of lading were so artfully contrived that the shipowner was enabled to contract himself entirely out of the obligation to keep his ship in a seaworthy condition. It had been suggested that no words introduced into the bill of lading should exonerate the shipowner from the obligation to keep his vessel in a safe condition, and that the underwriter should not be liable, whether under the time or voyage policy, unless the shipowner and shipmaster had used all reasonable efforts to make and keep the ship seaworthy.

He had said enough to establish a case for inquiry, with a view to the amendment of the law. Underwriters and insurance companies, who had the largest and most important business, cared nothing for the protection afforded by the law. They relied on the character of those with whom they did business. Underwriters in less fortunate positions were exposed to all the evil influences of excessive competition. Many were tempted to take unwarrantable risks by high premiums. No partial measures would suffice to deal with this great question. Juries, as a rule, had been too partial to shipowners; and the Royal Commission had recommended that a judge and two assessors should be substituted for the present tribunal. More complete remedies than this were, however, required. The Commission recommended a general revision of the law, and in his opinion an international agreement on the subject would be for the advantage of the mercantile community. The law of marine insurance was founded on the custom of merchants, the statutes of the realm, and the decisions of able and impartial judges, and should not be altered without the most careful consideration of the probable effect of the changes proposed in relation to the seaworthiness of our shipping. For this purpose we required a deliberate inquiry by the highest legal authorities, with whom should be associated men of the highest commercial standing. The Commissioners would

have before them a task of great importance, difficulty, and delicacy. He did not urge any hasty action in this matter. He was well aware that a full inquiry was an essential preliminary to legislation, and he ventured to hope that the inquiry might be extended to other countries.

He knew how unjust it was to draw up a severe indictment against shipowners as a class. Sometimes they were condemned as men who conducted their business on the most selfish principles. Shipowners, as a rule, made moderate profits, and they had passed through many dark periods of depression. In shipping, as in every profession and every industry in this country, the pressure of competition was keenly felt, and where unjustifiable risks were run, in most cases it would be found that the owners were struggling to make both ends meet. He understood the Government had in contemplation a Committee to prosecute an inquiry into the subject. But no mere Departmental Committee would have the authority which would attach to a Royal Commission, working under the presidency of an eminent judge. If they could not succeed in compelling every shipowner to be to a certain extent his own insurer, or if they could prevent excessive valuation, all other legislation with a view to the safety of life at sea would be superfluous. Those who are opposed to load-lines and surveys said truly that the commercial instinct of the shipowner and the experience of the shipmaster were the most reliable guarantee for the seaworthiness of shipping, and that Government surveyors could not have the same practical knowledge as persons actually engaged in the trade. But that commercial instinct must be less keen and less acute when, by the over-valuation of the ship and freight, the owner stood to win and not to lose by the loss of his ship.

Difficulties  
of ship-  
owners.

The aim of future legislation must therefore be to confine marine insurance to a simple contract of indemnity. Thus limited, it might justly be regarded—to use the language of Jeremy Bentham—as ‘one of the most beneficial inventions of civilised society. No one will neglect his actual possessions, a good certain and present, with the hope of recovering in case of loss only an equivalent of the thing lost, and even, at the most, an equivalent. To this let it be added that the recovery cannot be obtained without care and expense, and that there must be a transient privation.’ In conclusion, he would refer to some personal experience of his own. At the close of last year he spent a month afloat on the Bosphorus, watching day by day the busy traffic in those pleasant waters. The pride an Englishman must feel at seeing the flag of his own country displayed by so many

ships was tempered by regret that amid that fleet, on the whole so admirably adapted to its purpose, there were some vessels of a very different character, bad in design, or more often grossly overladen. When he compared the buoyant trim which he thought necessary in his little vessel, with the heavily-laden steamers in which he saw so many poor fellows starting for their homes—homes which, alas! they were destined never to reach, he had been moved with mingled pity and indignation; and he was resolved that he would do his best to secure for the British seaman that care and protection which would never be secured until the law of marine insurance was reformed.



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